

THE SECULAR AND THE SACRED

*An enquiry into the principles of a
Christian Civilization*

By the Same Author

The Gospel according to St. Matthew
(Westminster Commentaries)

Principles of Church Organization

Values of the Incarnation

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THE SECULAR AND THE SACRED

*An enquiry into the principles of a
Christian Civilization*

BEING THE BAMPTON LECTURES FOR 1946

by

PHILIP ARTHUR MICKLEM
D.D. OXON
PROVOST OF DERBY (1937-1947)



London HODDER AND STOUGHTON Limited

1946

Hazzell, Watson and Viney, Ltd., London and Alylesbury
Made and Printed in Great Britain by

FIRST PRINTED . . . FEBRUARY 1948

DEDICATED
TO MY WIFE

Theology Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

16795

Extract from the
Last Will and Testament
of
The Late Rev. JOHN BAMPTON
Canon of Salisbury

“ **I** GIVE and bequeath my Lands and Estates to the Chancellor, Masters, and Scholars of the University . . . of Oxford for ever, to have and to hold all and singular the said Lands or Estates upon trust, and to the intents and purposes hereinafter mentioned ; that is to say, I will and appoint that the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford for the time being shall take and receive all the rents, issues, and profits thereof, and (after all taxes, reparations, and necessary deductions made) that he pay all the remainder to the endowment of eight Divinity Lecture Sermons, to be established for ever in the said University, and to be performed in the manner following :

“ I direct and appoint, that, upon the first Tuesday in Easter Term, a Lecturer may be yearly chosen by the Heads of Colleges only, and by no others, in the room adjoining to the Printing House, between the hours of ten in the morning and two in the afternoon, to preach eight Divinity Lecture Sermons, the year following, at St. Mary’s in Oxford, between the commencement of the last month in Lent Term, and the end of the third week in Act Term.

“ Also I direct and appoint, that the eight Divinity Lecture

Sermons shall be preached upon either of the following subjects—to confirm and establish the Christian faith, and to confute all heretics and schismatics—upon the divine authority of the holy Scriptures—upon the authority of the writings of the primitive Fathers, as to the faith and practice of the primitive Church—upon the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—upon the Divinity of the Holy Ghost—upon the Articles of the Christian Faith, as comprehended in the Apostles' and Nicene Creed.

“Also I direct, that thirty copies of the eight Divinity Lecture Sermons shall be always printed, within two months after they are preached; and one copy shall be given to the Chancellor of the University, and one copy to the Head of every College, and one copy to the Mayor of the City of Oxford, and one copy to be put into the Bodleian Library; and the expense of printing them shall be paid out of the revenue of the Land or Estates given for establishing the Divinity Lecture Sermons; and the preacher shall not be paid nor be entitled to the revenue, before they are printed.

“Also I direct and appoint, that no person shall be qualified to preach the Divinity Lecture Sermons, unless he hath taken the degree of Master of Arts at least, in one of the two Universities of Oxford or Cambridge; and that the same person shall never preach the Divinity Lecture Sermons twice.”

P R E F A C E

THE following Lectures are concerned not with pure, but with applied, theology, with theology in its application to human history and human society. They are thus in great part historical in character. They do not, however, look only to the past. They seek further to make some contribution to the resolution of the human situation of our time. On the other hand, they emerge from a definite theological background. They presuppose throughout the belief that theology is fundamentally the key to the human problem, and that Europe, and indeed mankind, will only emerge from the predicament in which it is set, accentuated tenfold by the late war and its tragic aftermath, and find the way to "right order" in our time, if consciously or unconsciously it accepts the presuppositions of the unchanging Philosophy of Christ as the basis on which it seeks to rebuild its shattered life.

And it is on the basis of the acceptance of these presuppositions that we are faced to-day with the primary requirement of a fresh integration, in terms of our age, of the secular and the sacred, the natural and the supernatural, in a unified order of life and society. Our contention is that the two realms, that of the secular and that of the sacred, belong to each other and require each other, and that they found their classical form of mutual integration, in theory and in great measure in practice, in medieval Christendom, but that in the centuries succeeding that era they have drifted into mutual isolation. We would allow to the full that the long period of

divorce has brought to light and asserted potentialities of positive value on either side of the gulf, potentialities, however, which still await their full fruition : and we would maintain that what is called for to-day, with an urgency born of a desperate human need, is a renewed synthesis of the two realms, a synthesis less rigid indeed, and vastly wider and more comprehensive, than that attained in the earlier epoch, and taking concrete shape in an organic order of Christian civilization, congruous with the conditions of a new epoch in human history.

We have, in the title of these lectures, deliberately chosen the order in which the two terms stand, natural though it might have appeared to give the Sacred priority of place. Yet it is primarily the Secular, the vast and complex realm of this-worldly interests and pursuits, which, we are convinced, calls and needs to be re-established in its own right, and with its proper dignity and value. For it is indeed precisely of these rights and of that dignity that paradoxically the era of secularism has robbed the Secular. Divorced in its context from any higher transcendent reference, claiming to be wholly self-sufficient in and for itself, cut off from any vital contact with the realm of "grace and truth" revealed in Jesus Christ, the Secular has forfeited its true character, failed to reveal its inherent worth, and fallen short of its due fulfilment. Nay more, it has fallen a prey to the forces of corruption and disintegration latent within it.

It is emphatically not the case that we deny the relative autonomy of the Secular. The assertion of that autonomy has been made, once for all, by the modern age, and must be respected. What, however, that age has forgotten, ignored, and indeed explicitly denied, is that that very autonomy is only secure, that the Secular can only maintain its proper rights, and reveal its proper worth, if it be constantly

recognized that it is not a realm complete in itself, but that by its very nature it points beyond itself to a realm of eternal and transcendent values, by its relation and subordination to which it can alone find completion and obey the law of its own fulfilment.

With equal insistence, however, we have maintained that the growing separation from each other of the two realms, by which the modern age has been marked, and the climax of the tragic consequences of which we are witnessing on the stage of the world to-day, is not due only to the assertion of a false and unqualified autonomy on the part of the Secular. It is due also to a failure on the part of the Sacred, and more particularly of the Sacred as it finds embodiment in the Church, to discharge its proper mission, a readiness on its side, too, to withdraw into itself as a self-complete compartment of life, and an ignoring of the fact that the natural order as a whole, the whole this-worldly realm at all its levels and in its fullest range, stamped itself with the creative purpose of God, is given as the very material to which it is the mission of the Sacred to reach out and reach down with redemptive, interpreting, transfiguring power.

Thus the key to the future lies as much with the Church as with the world; and the supreme question of our time, to which an answer in terms both of thought and of action is called for, is whether, and if so along what lines, the long divorce can be ended: whether and how, on the one hand, the Secular can be delivered from the bitter and unnatural fruit of secularism, not by a denial of its proper nature and its very real rights, but by the recognition that that nature can only find fulfilment and those rights be secured as it acknowledges its inherent need of self-transcendence through its contact with a supernatural order, which yet itself is not alien from, but congruous with it; and whether, on the other hand, the

Sacred, in keeping with the supreme Pattern given once for all in the Person of Christ, can, while remaining true to itself and its transcendent character, reach out to, interpret, cleanse and complete the lower realm of the Secular. Only as this question is answered can there be a reuniting of what God in Christ has joined together, but man has put asunder, with its issue in a renewed Christendom within which the values of the Secular and the Sacred will be brought to fruition through their mutual integration.

PROVOST'S HOUSE,
DERBY.

December, 1946.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am much indebted to the Reverend S. W. Hartnoll, B.A., B.D., for the compilation of the full and detailed Index which stands at the close of this volume.

P. A. M.

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Instaurare omnia in Christo (Eph. i, 10)

SUMMARY OF THE LECTURES

I

THE TWO REALMS

OVER against the secular as the this-worldly realm stands the sacred, as the realm of the “other” and of ultimate values: and it is the effective relation between the two realms which largely determines the character of any particular epoch of history or order of society. The union of godhead and manhood in the Person of Christ provides the supreme pattern of the resolution of the tension between the two realms, and it is only in a Christian context that each is accorded its proper value in relation to the other. It is the office of the sacred to penetrate and inform the secular, and while at any cost it must retain its quality of transcendence, it stultifies itself if it remains a realm apart, without contact with the world of secular activities. And correspondingly the realm of the secular possesses its own rightful autonomy, yet stands condemned if it claims to be self-sufficient for all the needs of man. It only comes into its own, and finds fulfilment, as it is brought under the redemptive power of the sacred. Yet equally the sacred must not overreach itself, or unduly fetter the relative freedom of self-expression which the secular should enjoy. For history shows that such an undue extension of the realm of the sacred provokes an inevitable recoil to a secularism which bears its own fatal fruit. We have in our own generation witnessed the outcome of an untrammelled secularism in one of the darkest pages of history, and it may be claimed that the time is ripe

for a reassertion of the sacred in relation to the whole realm of the secular, and in forms appropriate to the needs of a new age.

II

THE BIBLICAL PATTERN

The Biblical record closes with the vision of the City of God, the ordered community of redeemed humanity, as the appropriate climax of the strand of hope and expectation which runs through the whole. The pre-supposition of the whole record is indeed the fact of God, one holy and transcendent: yet, equally throughout, the concrete facts of human history, and within history as a whole that of a particular community, are affirmed as the sphere of the divine self-revelation and of the fulfilment of the divine purpose. It was the unique mission discharged by the prophets, refusing, on the one hand, the way of other-worldly absorption in God and, on the other, of accepting the existing social and moral standards of their people, to maintain the tension between the transcendent holy and the Israel of their day, to which the sacrificial system also bore witness. In spite of repeated apostasy the prophets never despair of their people, still cleave to them as the covenanted medium through which the divine kingdom and righteousness is to find embodiment. Under the old covenant, however, the tension between the divine challenge and the human response remains unresolved, until in the fulness of time and "without observation" it is overcome in the kingdom of our Lord's teaching and works, and above all in His Person. For it is in the Incarnation that the transcendent

holy finds at last its perfect embodiment in human terms, the doctrine of the Person of Christ, as the Church came to formulate it, providing not only a fundamental dogma of religion but an ultimate sociological principle, viz. that of the acceptance of the natural order as that which yet only finds its completion and fulfilment as it is redeemed, taken up into and united with the divine.

III

THE GREAT ANTINOMY

The title of the Lecture indicates the cleavage effected by Christianity in the traditional one-level order of the old world. It broke into that world with a new proclamation of a realm of eternal values to which man's ultimate allegiance was due. The outlook of the classical world, Greek and Roman, was of the secular this-worldly type, identified too with the State or Polis as the sphere within which man's life was wholly comprised. It was not that religion had not a large, indeed a preponderating, place in the life of the Polis: it did mean, however, that religion itself fell within the one-level order constituted by the State, and made no claim to provide an independent standard of ultimate validity. It was this traditional order which was seen to be menaced by Christianity. For unlike the mystery cults it stood not merely for a way of escape from the world, but for a revolutionary force threatening to transform it. Inevitably, therefore, as the threat thus constituted to the existing structure of the Empire was discerned, it was countered with every weapon at the disposal of the upholders of

the established order, direct persecution, official patronage, and heretical versions of Christianity. Yet the adoption of Christianity as the religion of the Empire served only to disguise for a time the incompatibility of the full implications of the Nicene faith with the traditional outlook for which Romanitas stood. It needed the fall of Rome before the barbarians, and the publication of Augustine's philosophy of history, to demonstrate once for all that citizenship in an earthly Polis could not comprise the whole life of man, and so indirectly to lay the foundation of a new order of civilization based on the recognized supremacy of eternal over temporal values.

IV

CHRISTENDOM IN FACT AND IDEA

The problem with which the post-Augustinian age was faced was that of establishing a Christian civilization on the basis of a synthesis of spiritual and temporal within a single all-embracing order of society. Its ruling aim of bringing the whole of life into subjection to the law of Christ was accepted by both the civil and the ecclesiastical authority. The question at issue was as to whether the one or the other was primarily responsible for implementing the ideal: and while in the earlier Carolingian period the means adopted was that of theocratic kingship, the trend both of theory and of events told inevitably in favour of the later assertion of universal jurisdiction on the part of the Papal hierarchy. The aim of including all life within the realm of the sacred found its theoretical justification

in the acceptance of the lower levels of the secular order as themselves under law to God, and as a preparatory stage towards fulfilment in the kingdom of grace. Nor in practice were there as yet departments economic, political or other, asserting an autonomy independent of the law divine as prescribed by the ecclesiastical authority. Such resistance to an ecclesiastically controlled order came rather from the sects organized on the principle of complete world-denial. The weakness of the medieval synthesis, grand as it was in aim and accomplishment, lay in its very completeness, and the large measure of concession to the established order which it involved: while its assertion of the supremacy of the sacred along external theocratic lines was bound to provoke a recoil from the rising forces of self-expression in the Renaissance age.

V

THE RENAISSANCE CHALLENGE

The Renaissance period of history was inaugurated by the rupture of the unitary conception of life, and of its institutional setting, represented by medieval Christendom. In medieval thought and practice the realms of nature and of grace had found their synthesis and mutual reconciliation. Now the two realms fell apart; the Renaissance standing for the assertion of certain secular values, and the Reformation for that of certain religious values, which failed to find expression within the traditional limits set by ecclesiastical authority. Essentially the Renaissance represented a humanism for which room might be found within a Christian order of life, but which in isolation tended

to merge into a self-sufficient secularism. Meanwhile, institutional religion tended to withdraw into a limited sphere of its own, leaving the rising forces in the secular realm to go their own way. Thus Lutheranism with its concentration on inward liberty practised and preached a political quietism, which paved the way for the secular absolutist state of modern times. On the other hand, in spite of its Protestant affirmations, Calvinism continued in a narrowed field the Catholic tradition of the Church State coterminous with, and controlling, human life and society. In particular it provided a needed religious basis for the new commercialism of the age, a religious basis which, having served its purpose, could be discarded. The tradition of a genuine Catholic art and culture was maintained in the Church of the Counter-Reformation. But, preoccupied as it was with fighting defensive battles on the religious and political fields, it failed to meet the leading movements of the new age with a revised social ethic. Meanwhile, in the theology and worship of the Church of the English Reformation there was a balance and proportion providing a basis for an integral humanism harmonizing the values of the Renaissance and the Reformation, a balance which, however, in practice proved too precarious to resist the dominant forces of an individualistic and commercial age.

VI

THE RISING TIDE OF SECULARISM

The presupposition of secularism, as a main characteristic of the modern age, is that man is wholly a creature of this world, and that it is within his power to fulfil his nature and his destiny within the temporal framework of life. It thus denies the fact, or the claim, of any transcendent moral standard of ultimate authority and given of God, and represents a conscious revolt against the Christian tradition in which Europe grew to maturity. It has reached its most extreme and concentrated expression in the Totalitarian State of our time with its erection of state policy into a pseudo-absolute claiming from every citizen unqualified religious devotion. Yet, as such, it is only the outcome of a tendency long at work in modern Europe to assert an unqualified autonomy in the secular sphere and to exclude the application of the values of religion from the whole realm of public affairs. Meanwhile, on its side the Church has tended to withdraw into a compartment of its own, and to confine itself to the religious needs of its own members. With the Cartesian philosophy began the process of atomization under which the individual, and within the individual one particular faculty, was isolated and erected into the first principle of a world order. The mechanical conception of the world, given philosophical expression in France, found its practical outcome in this country in a revolutionized social and industrial order, subordinating man as a creature of economic appetites to the demands of manufacture, and stimulated by a belief, a belief which has invaded the East

as well as the West, in technical mastery as the key to unlimited progress and to a new era of civilization. It is only as the tragic outcome of this conception has been illustrated in the events of our time that it has become evident that technical mastery is a double-edged weapon as easily turned to purposes of destruction as to those of liberation. The characteristic product of a machine-governed age is a depersonalized humanity severed from the natural conditions of life in community; hence a primary demand of our time is that for a rehabilitation of man and his recovery of conditions on the natural level which are in keeping with his status as a son in his Father's house.

VII

THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD

For the establishment and maintenance of a Christian order of society a diffused Christianity is not enough. For that there is need for the Church, as the organized community of those who are pledged to live up to the full Christian demand. It must, however, be acknowledged that the Church has increasingly been discounted as a major factor in the making of history. On the other hand, recent events have proved that when the fundamental liberties are threatened it is the Church which is looked to to safeguard them. Moreover, in meeting this challenge it rediscovers itself and its Gospel. As custodian of the sacred, the Church is the standing witness of the revelation of God in Christ, which asserts both the ultimate fact and claim of God and also the way of man's fulfilment. It is the secular, and not the sacred only, which comes into its own within the revelation

of which the Church is the trustee. In its prophetic witness the Church will assert the Law Natural acknowledged in the mind and conscience of man as the foundation of his true status. What primarily matters in the Church's mission to the world is the quality and level of its own life: and it is, not least, when it is set in a traditionally Christian society that the distinction between Church and world must at all costs be maintained. Hence the importance of the relation of the Church to the State which in its modern form tends to be all-embracing in its scope and to affect the whole life of the citizen inward and outward. The danger thus constituted is not so much that of direct attack on the basic liberties, but rather that of a subtle conditioning of human life to a uniform pattern, and of the undermining of the integrity of the person. Against this peril the Church will stand by maintaining its own autonomy, and by exemplifying in its own fellowship the responsible freedom of each member. The Concordat basis of the relation between Church and State may still leave the Church inadequately protected. On the other hand, the principle of Establishment as represented in this country is of value so long, and only so long, as it stands for the recognition by State and Nation of the ultimate validity of the Christian law. Moreover, effective witness to the things of Christ can only be borne by a united Church. Hence, in face of the paramount need for world unity, the intolerable character of our religious divisions both at home and in the Church at large.

VIII

A RENEWED CHRISTENDOM

After the age of departmentalization a dialectical pattern of history might indicate that we are due for an age of synthesis, and of a renewed mutual integration of the secular and sacred realms. Yet history is not shaped by any such determinist principle. To-day we stand at a great divide with a fateful choice to make, making its demands on both the secular and the sacred sides. Yet on neither side are the signs favourable. In the secular sphere there is a growing confidence in the ability of science to provide a complete frame of life; while on its side the Church has not yet shown signs of measuring up to the greatness of its mission. Of vital importance is the reconciliation of the claims of religion and science, a service which an ancient university can pre-eminently help to render, welcoming and promoting the new knowledge, yet as an integral element in a Christian culture. On the wider field, a primary need is that of the establishment of conditions on the natural level in keeping with man's personal dignity. In the sphere of government such a demand must find expression in the widest extension of effective political responsibility. Yet equally must the democratic principle be applied in industry, particularly in the transformation of the status of the worker. Above all is there the demand for a "return to husbandry," and for a renewed contact with the soil as a way of life.

Yet something more is needed than can be supplied on the natural level. However well ordered it may be, the Secular

can only be delivered from frustration and brought to fruition, as it is vivified and transmuted by the forces of religion. Hence the demand on the Church as the custodian of the values of the sacred, a demand to be primarily met (1) in manifesting the authentic note of personal holiness, (2) in groups of those pledged in their fellowship to live up to the Christian demand in every relationship of life, (3) in the equipping and sending out of men and women resolved to witness to Christ in every place. The altar is the place at which their offering is made and the consecration to their mission received.

I

THE TWO REALMS

IT is the purpose of these lectures to consider the implications of the terms secular and sacred, to set over against each other the two realms represented by the terms, and to draw attention to their mutual impacts and relationships, more particularly within a Christian context. We shall be concerned to a large extent with the currents and movements of history, not, however, in and for themselves, but as they illustrate in concrete forms the action and reaction of the two realms upon each other in the social, political and other spheres. Our main concern is with the conditions of right order in the world, and of right order as constituted by the co-ordination of the two realms within an organic unity. Throughout, indeed, our contention is that the ultimate resolution of the tension between the two realms is to be found in the Person of Christ, and that right order in the world is determined by the degree to which it is the embodiment, in the concrete terms of human society, of the truth of the Incarnation. Thus our thesis must stand or fall by its accordance with the fundamental dogma of the Christian faith. It is based expressly upon theological presuppositions. It is not, indeed, that these lectures purport to be a theological treatise in line with many of their predecessors. Yet concerned as they mainly are with the texture of history and its interpretation, it may yet be claimed on their behalf that they are fully in keeping with the declared purpose of the founder of this Lectureship, inasmuch as their implication throughout is that in the Person of Christ, as that Person

stands out from the Biblical record and is unfolded in the doctrine and experience of the Church, is to be found the key to human nature and destiny, and to right order in the world of men.

For the Christ is more than the supreme Teacher revealing the will and way of God to men, and illuminating human life. He is more than a supreme historical figure whose influence has been carried down the centuries, and is yet potent. He is in His own Person the watershed of the stream of history, and the key to its interpretation, its Alpha and Omega, its beginning and its end. And it is as human life in its narrower and wider circles, in the clash and counter-clash of great historical movements, in its representative institutions, and in the spirit of particular epochs, conforms to the pattern thus once for all given in the Mount, that to-day, as in the past, it reveals or fails to reveal its true significance and value, attains or fails to attain its true destiny. Still as ever, He is the Way, the Truth and the Life for all men, for all peoples, for every epoch of civilization. In Him, and in Him alone, humanity and human society come to full maturity. And it is as the two realms represented respectively by the terms secular and sacred are reconciled in a living synthesis true to the revelation of Godhead and manhood in the one Person of Christ that there are constituted, to the degree possible in temporal and earthly terms, the conditions of a Christian order of society.

It is, then, that supreme pattern of life given once for all in the Person of Christ that must be the background, if not the foreground, of our world picture throughout. Yet equally throughout must be kept in view the concrete and particular human situation, and not least the human situation as it confronts us to-day. For indeed it cannot be without holding constantly in view the predicament in which, at this

turning-point of history, humanity is set that we essay the task which these lectures represent. Indeed, they fail of their purpose unless the endeavour is made to provide some indication of the direction in which humanity must look, if it is to find firm ground on which to stand amid the shifting sands of the present, and a basis of hope for the future in the darkness and confusion of our time. Occupied as they largely will be with a review of the past, that review is undertaken in order to illustrate in its relevance to other epochs a guiding principle which is equally relevant to our own. Over against the "things that are shaken"¹ in the world of to-day our object throughout is to point to the "things which are not shaken," to that *βασιλεία ἀσάλευτος*, that kingdom unshaken and unshakable, by claiming our assured heritage in which we do not seek a way of escape from the contingencies of this present evil time, but rather to discern and point to the one way of recovery for human society shattered and broken almost, it would seem, beyond remedy.

These lectures are delivered on the morrow of a catastrophe not only world-wide in extent, but unparalleled in the destruction which it has effected. It is not only that the outward fabric of civilized life, particularly in Europe, has in many quarters been laid in ruins and that whole cities with all the varied structures old and new, including the homes of the people, which constitute great cities have been levelled with the ground. It is not only that for whole populations there has been a merciless uprooting from all their traditional ties of place and soil, and a herding of them into migratory multitudes moving helplessly across the face of Europe, with all the attendant perils of famine and pestilence which may well overtake them. It is also that, as a result of this gigantic upheaval, affecting the lives of millions,

¹ Heb. xii, 27 f.

the moral foundations of society have been undermined. There is no longer a common standard or outlook beyond that of the immediate physical necessities of the moment. The accepted loyalties of the past, civil, social and moral, have largely gone by the board. And for multitudes there remains little more than a hopeless apathy with regard to the principles which have formed the traditional basis of European order.

Meanwhile, to wrestle with this chaos and desolation, physical and moral alike, to provide the primary elements of order and decency, of security and hope, to lay foundations on which a renewed structure of life, political, economic and cultural, can gradually be erected, is the task which is being attempted, with such wisdom, patience and sympathy as can be drawn upon, by those, from statesmen downwards, immediately responsible for the recovery of Europe. Their part is the primary and essential one of restoring the elements of a natural basis for a society which morally and physically has been wrenched adrift from its accustomed moorings, and to provide for the fundamental conditions of life which can alone make possible the rebuilding of a settled civilized order.

But more, much more, is needed than this. "It is necessary," said His Majesty the King in his broadcast on Christmas Day, 1946, "not merely to feed hungry people, and to rebuild ruined cities, but also to restore the very soul of civilization."¹ When in the valley of dry bones, which much of Europe represents, the Valley, as Ezekiel² saw it, bone had come together to bone to form an articulated skeleton, and the skeleton itself had been clothed with sinews, and with flesh and skin, it still lacked breath; and until it is breathed upon by the wind of God and quickened

¹ *The Times*, December 27th, 1946.

² Ezek. xxxvii, 1-14.

by His Spirit, the body politic of Europe still remains a dead thing, without purpose, without sense of direction, without a living bond of unity ; and only when the breath of God enters it can its multitudes live again, and “stand up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.” For man the world over, and not least European man, has needs which reach beyond those of social order and economic security, beyond, too, that of political independence. He needs a common faith which can illuminate his path, give meaning and worth to his endeavours, and provide a spiritual link between him and his fellows. And if the new order which is to be pieced together from the broken fragments of the old is to be spiritually continuous with Europe’s past greatness, and in line with its central tradition, that common faith can be none other than the faith of Christ, as from age to age it has supplied the spiritual cement of the fabric of European life. Supplementing, interpreting, completing the natural basis of life, the whole secular order as it will re-emerge and take shape, stands the Sacred, the realm of transcendent reality, of grace and truth, given and revealed from above, and made finally manifest in the Person of Christ, as that by the acceptance of the supremacy of which, at every level, can alone that new and better order of justice and freedom, of peace and brotherhood, be established for which humanity, however inarticulately, is yearning.

The title “The Secular and the Sacred” has been chosen for these lectures because, we would maintain, it is the interaction and tension between the two realms represented by these terms which constitutes the texture of history and provides a guiding principle in confronting the issues of our own time. We would emphasize that it is as these terms are used, and the relation between them determined, in a Christian context that they supply that principle of interpretation and

guidance, in reference both to the past and to our own confused age, of which we stand in need. Indeed we would maintain that it is only in a Christian context that the two realms emerge both in their distinctness, and in their mutual correlation. Ultimately, as we have already indicated, the Christian context within which the two realms are both discerned, each in its true nature, and also integrated into an organic unity, is nothing less or other than that of the Incarnation, the revelation of God in the Person of Jesus Christ. For there in the Person of Christ, as discerned by the mind of the Church in the light of the New Testament and of its own experience, and eventually finding formal definition, manhood in its own nature and on its own level, retaining its own identity, is not absorbed and merged in Godhead, but is self-fulfilled, completed and perfected by being taken into God. And, conversely, it is in the Person of Christ that the unseen and eternal realm of transcendent reality, the Word and Wisdom divine, which "was in the beginning, was with God, and was God"¹ was manifested, manhood itself thus becoming the vehicle and channel of the utterly holy.

Yet more, the taking of manhood into God in the Person of Christ carries with it, potentially, the redemption and the transfiguration of humanity as a whole, and of that whole natural order in which humanity is rooted. Thus the truth for which the Incarnation stands is not only the fundamental dogma of religion; it is the fundamental postulate of a Christian sociology. For it is as the will and purpose of God, revealed in the Person of Christ and in His incarnate life, is fulfilled that there emerges an order of human society, a community ultimately as wide as humanity, as the expression in temporal terms of the truth which finds supreme

¹ Jn. i. 1.

illustration and embodiment in the Incarnation, a community characterized by all the richness and variety of man's creative capacity and achievement, yet at the same time, at every level, and in every department of its many-sided vitality, finding its meaning, its purpose and its bond of unity by submission to a common law and the acceptance of a common faith.

There is then, we would contend, a pattern of history and a standard of social order which are or may be the expression, in terms of the life and institutions of mankind, of the revelation of God in Christ. We would claim further that, in reviewing the past and evaluating the present in the light of the guiding principle given once for all in the Person of Christ, we are doing far more than advancing an *a priori* hypothesis for verification or disproof, as one among alternative conceptions of the significance of history which compete for acceptance. To apply the truth as it is in Christ as a ruling principle by which to assess the significance of past epochs, and as our light in the darkness of the present, is not to assert an arbitrary doctrinaire standard of interpretation. If we may assume, as in this place may justly be assumed, that in the Person of Christ the divine and eternal reality, in which we live and move and have our being, was visibly manifested within and under the temporal conditions of our humanity, then we have here assured to us the key to the final significance of history, the guiding thread, which we need, to find our way through the *Sturm und Drang* of the centuries, and not least of our own time.

It is not, of course, that we deny the relative validity of, the measure of truth contained in, other conceptions of history and of human society, as for example the Marxist which perhaps, in so far as it claims finality, is to-day the main competitor with the Christian for the allegiance of the

Western world. What, however, we are looking for, and what we claim to possess, is not a sidelight on history, illuminating and bringing into prominence some one aspect of it, but in Christ the truth of man, of history and of civilization in their central and ultimate significance. And this precisely because it is just in so far as the pattern of life which finds supreme embodiment in the Incarnation is worked out in the life and institutions of society, that humanity itself comes into its own, is self-fulfilled, exhibits its full potentiality and attains its destined end, destined, let us again insist, not in accordance with any arbitrary fiat issued from without, but in accordance with the very nature of man as finally and fully revealed in the Person of Christ.

Here, indeed, is no determinist conception of history, but rather one which contains within it all the elements of tragedy. For if Christ is the light of the world, it is only too possible, as history attests, for men to "love the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds are evil."¹ If there is for man a God-given destiny, it is only as he accepts it and its implications that that destiny can be fulfilled. The kingdom and commonwealth of the divine purpose, given from above, and providing a regulative standard for all man's seeing and doing, yet remains a remote and distant ideal except as it is discerned, striven for and embodied in the concrete actualities of human life and institutions. Nor can there be any limit set, geographical, institutional or other, to the range or area within which this pattern of life holds good. Ultimately there can be no division of territory between that which stands under the law of Christ and that which stands without. The division, for example, between the Church and the secular world is not the boundary which separates that which falls within and that which remains

¹ Jn. iii, 19.

without the dominion of Christ. There is, and must be, as we shall see, an inner imperium of the organized, unified, sacramental and institutional life of the Church as the custodian and trustee of the sacred values, but only in order that these values may find appropriate application at all levels and in all spheres of human life. Beyond this inner imperium there lies the vast and varied field of secular activity which yet itself, in its degree and way, is potentially Christian and is destined to be brought under law to Christ: which indeed, while possessing and exercising its own relative liberty, requires to be brought into subjection to the sacred if it is to be delivered from the forces of corruption within it and to be integrated in an organic unity which reveals its full worth and significance.

And what we mean by a Christian civilization, as the term is used in the sub-title of these lectures, is an order of human life and society, potentially world-wide in extent, accepting and conformed to a common law, a Word given from on high, redemptive and transfiguring in power and effect, once for all uttered in Christ, by the submission to which of the secular world, and to the degree to which it submits, the kingdom of God comes on earth. This is not to maintain that that kingdom, given from above, can ever find final expression under the temporal conditions of human society; for however far translated into terms of history and the temporal order, it looks beyond history for its fulfilment. It is, however, to maintain that there is or may be a world order, not stereotyped and static, but continually adjusted to new conditions and movements as they arise on the secular level, which conforms, within the limits possible under earthly conditions, to the pattern of life recorded in Holy Scripture and finding supreme manifestation in the Person of Christ.

We have, then, seen that the conditions of a Christian order of civilization are fulfilled in so far as, on the one hand, the secular realm is vindicated in its own right, as possessing a worth and dignity and a relative autonomy of its own, yet also stands under the supremacy of the sacred as representing a moral standard of final and unqualified validity, and, on the other hand, in so far as the sacred realm itself does not stand isolated and aloof, but, while remaining true to its essential quality of transcendence, permeates and subdues, redeems and transfigures the secular. It is thus obvious that, broadly speaking, there are clearly marked periods of history, and forms of ordered life, which stand out as patently inadequate to, indeed as contradictory of, the Christian demand. It is, of course, only possible at this stage to denote such epochs and forms of social structure in the broadest terms, and without the qualifications which a detailed analysis would demand.

But, subject to such qualifications, it may be said that the conditions of a Christian order remain unfulfilled, and are denied, when the sacred tends to absorb the secular into itself; when in particular the sacred institution, representing an authority recognized as supreme in the moral and spiritual sphere, presumes on the respect paid to it by an undue extension of its exercise beyond its appropriate limits: in effect over-riding the autonomy which the various departments and interests of society, including that of the State, can rightly claim, and asserting a prescriptive right of domination and direction over the whole field of temporal affairs. The price paid for such a tendency is the forfeiture by the Church of its essential quality of spiritual detachment, carried it may be so far that it becomes indistinguishable from a secular institution set on the pursuit of secular ends, debasing its guardianship of the sacred values by a policy

which, however far represented as adopted for spiritual ends, is in fact dictated by considerations of worldly interest. Set as it is in the temporal order, and as such necessarily subjected to the economic and political conditions of that order, with the mission too of bringing that temporal world under the dominion of Christ, the Church may all too easily yield to the danger and temptation of itself being secularized, indistinguishable both in the ends which it sets itself, and the means which it adopts, from the world of secular interests around it.

But the converse may equally happen, of the secular absorbing the sacred into itself in a way, and to an extent, which again is a flagrant contradiction of the conditions of a Christian order of society. The secular authority, possessing a legitimate freedom and autonomy on its own level and within its own sphere, may erect itself and its self-chosen interests into an absolute, claiming the entire and unconditional devotion of man. The state which makes such a claim will repudiate the authority in the moral sphere not only of the Church, but of any law given from beyond and above, and of final and universal validity. It will erect its own self-judged relative interests, relative, that is, to the political situation and the political end in view, into a law binding on the conscience of the citizen, from which there is no appeal and itself invested with a sacred character. It will prostitute man's inherent capacity for entire and unqualified surrender, his profound instinct for the sacred and for the regard proper to it, and will concentrate this deepest of all human sentiments, this need for spiritual self-transcendence, on that which is within and not beyond the temporal order, conferring a sacred and final validity on interests of state as determined by itself. Meanwhile its attitude to the Church, as charged with the guardianship of the spiritual

and ultimate values of life in their relevance to every sphere, will be that of endeavouring to bring it within and under itself, by a process of *Gleichschaltung*, and when it proves recalcitrant to political pressure, of persecuting it out of resistance, and even of existence.

But once again the conditions of that order of life, with which we are concerned, may remain unfulfilled when the secular and the sacred do not seek to absorb one the other but stand mutually aloof and confine themselves each to its own immediate interests, each content to order and govern its own affairs by standards of its own, and without regard on either side to the contribution which each has to make to that “integral humanism”¹ which is characteristic of a Christian order of society. Such division of territory between the two realms may be the result of tacit agreement, or of an attitude of exclusion adopted on one side or the other. The pressure in the direction of such mutual isolation may come from the secular field in the form of an assertion, in one department or another, of an unqualified autonomy which disowns and repudiates any claim to a right of judgment upon its standards that may be made in the name of principles of universal validity resting ultimately on divine sanction. Or such pressure may proceed from the side of the sacred, in the form of a withdrawal of the Church within its own institutional shell, and a tendency to remain content with safeguarding and providing for the religious interests of its own adherents, meanwhile leaving the secular field without as a worldly realm with which it is not concerned, and from which its primary purpose is to hold itself apart.

But to exclude the vast and varied field of secular activities from the sphere with which the sacred is concerned is to accept the relegation of religion to a separate and confined

¹ J. Maritain, *Humanisme Integral*.

department, and to renounce any claim on behalf of religion to be applicable to the whole field of life. And such a renunciation on the part of religion is for it "*il gran rifiuto.*" It is to abdicate its mission. It is to stultify itself and to be false to its proper nature. For if the secular, as indeed is the case, is incomplete in and for itself, whatever its claims to self-sufficiency, so too is the sacred. The latter has no meaning except in relation to the secular, and its very purpose is to redeem and consecrate the secular. It remains as it were in the air, without standing or foothold, unless it is in living contact with the world of man's secular pursuits and institutions. Spirit demands a body within which and on which it can exercise its leavening and transforming influence; and only then does the spiritual have free course, and energize to the full reach of its creative and regenerative power, when it has a material on which to work and is at work upon it. And that material is nothing less than man as a whole, man in society as well as man as an individual, man too in the whole extent of his nature and the whole realm of his activities. Such for the sacred is the condition of its own self-fulfilment. It is not only for the sake of the secular, it is as the inevitable expression of its own nature, that the need arises for the sacred to be in contact with, and to be constantly subduing to itself, the realm of the secular. The realm of the transcendent holy remains one of unreality, inhibited and unfulfilled, unless and until it has taken hold of the world of men and of things, and has entered into and leavened the mass of human society.

It is true, of course, that there is the constant danger of the sacred losing its savour, its peculiar tone and quality, in its contact with the secular. The very thoroughness with which it is brought to bear upon the secular realm and penetrates it, is the measure of the peril to which it is exposed,

of itself being subdued by the secular, and moulded according to the fashion and spirit of the world, instead of being itself the subduing, dominating and transforming force. And this means that the holy must retain its apartness, its transcendent quality, even in the very process of its informing contact with the secular realm. It can only remain true to itself as it holds fast, at any cost, by its original quality of separateness and transcendence. If it is once wholly merged in the secular, it is lost. Instead of transforming it, it is liable itself to be transformed. Hence the need again and again on the part of the sacred to fall back on itself for the sake of its own renewal in power and purity. Again and again it needs to withdraw into itself, to stand aloof from its contact with the natural and temporal order, in order to resharpen its weapons, rekindle its fire, cleanse and purify itself from the taints which have assoiled it in its contacts with the world. But this very quality of apartness, and this renewed withdrawal into its own realm on the part of the holy, have for their meaning and purpose, not that it may remain aloof and self-contained, but rather that it may with greater power and pungency impart its savour to the vast field of the secular, which itself remains not incomplete only but subject to the forces of corruption and decay, except as it is redeemed and transformed by the impact of the sacred.

For if the sacred remains incomplete, arrested in its mission and purpose, a world of unreality, so long as it is organized wholly and permanently as a world apart, and fails to discharge its mission of subduing the secular and conforming it to itself, it is equally true that the secular falls short of self-fulfilment in so far as it claims to be self-sufficient in and for itself. However far it can claim, and rightly claim, autonomy on its own level, that autonomy is not unqualified. It is subject to moral sanctions rooted in the

very nature of things, sanctions deriving, indeed, from the revealed will divine, which it cannot disregard with impunity. It is no amoral, neutral realm superior to criteria of good and evil, exempt from the working of "the mystery of lawlessness."¹ It cannot evade the consequences of the fact, too often ignored or denied, that it contains within itself the seeds of corruption and disintegration, forces of death which sooner or later will assert their mastery of it, unless it acknowledges its dependence on the counter-forces of redemption and deliverance, which are not inherent in it, but spring from, and enter it from, another and higher realm. So true it is that there are demonic forces of evil and destruction ever couching at the door, ready to rise up and occupy the swept and garnished chamber left vacant through the exclusion from the secular realm of the presence and potent energies of the transcendent holy. So true it is that the secular is no complete and self-dependent realm, but only comes into its own and attains its fulfilment and fruition when brought under the redemptive power of the sacred and the divine. A secularist world view, which repudiates allegiance to any such higher realm, which claims that it is non-existent or at least irrelevant, is not only false to the facts: it bids fair to issue in self-confessed catastrophe.

But if secularism is self-defeating, it is not so often, or so clearly, recognized that a stretching beyond its measure is equally possible on the part of the sacred, and is equally fatal to an "integral humanism." Indeed, it must be acknowledged that the assertion of a defiant and self-sufficient secularism is not seldom the outcome of, and the answer to, an over-insistence on the claims of the sacred. The term secular may be taken as including all human activities and institutions concerned with this world, and which

¹ 2 Thess. ii, 7.

are products of man's own creative capacity. And, in distinction from the secular, the term sacred may be said to apply to that which has, or claims to have, about it a transcendent quality, which is invested with a status and an authority deriving from above and not from below, from God and not from man. It carries with it the implication of "absoluteness of value."¹ There is, therefore, a quality of the unconditional and the final, of an authority unquestioned and unquestionable, attaching to that which is called sacred, and which is lacking to the relative and contingent sphere of the secular. Towards the secular man behaves as master. It is there to use, and to be moulded to his purposes. From the sacred, on the other hand, so long as he recognizes it as such, he is bound to keep his distance, holding it and all to which it is attached in reverence and awe, placing himself under its authority and sanctions, suffering himself to be dominated and governed by it rather than presuming to subject it to his will. It stands immune from human judgment and criticism.

And it is here, of course, that an obvious danger arises. Clearly the conception of the sacred, as so defined, is all too liable to abuse. All too easily on the one hand can the sacred character, a character of absolute and final value, be attached, deliberately or otherwise, to objects self-chosen and self-erected, belonging essentially to the secular realm (as foci of worship), and man's inherent regard for the sacred be exploited for secular ends. And on the other hand there is the constant temptation of seeking to cover and maintain, under the cloak of their accepted character as sacred, binding traditions and sanctions which are no longer relevant to human life, and which as outdistanced and outgrown men instinctively reject. It is at such times that the

¹ Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 65.

category of the sacred, in the sense of any recognition of a higher non-temporal realm of values, is itself liable to repudiation, and that the tendency arises to organize human life anew on the basis of that repudiation.

Much depends, then, on the recognition by the sacred of its true character, and of the limitations so placed upon the authority exercised by it and accorded to it. All too easily it defeats its own ends, if in its zeal to be all-embracing in its scope, and to bring the whole of life under its control, it abandons the way of inward assimilation, seeks to impose an arbitrary dominance on recalcitrant material, and assumes for the purpose an institutional legalistic ascendancy. The evidence of history can be pointed to as showing that, when so interpreted, the sacred may prove a fettering and arresting, instead of a liberating and sanctifying force. In very varied forms, and at different epochs of civilization and history, religion, as the sphere of the sacred, has succumbed to this temptation, the temptation of exploiting its divine authority to impose an unwarranted tyranny on the life of man and on human society, and to thwart and hold back man's natural development and powers of initiative, whether in the sphere of thought and knowledge or of action. The rightful claim which the sacred makes to a relevance co-extensive with the whole of life has been asserted, in particular societies and at particular periods of history, in ways of arbitrary external control which were bound in due course to provoke a correspondingly violent recoil. At such times the sacred itself, in the forms in which it presents itself for the reverence and regard of men, is only too liable to be defied and rejected, and the free spirit of man to assert its claims to recognition by a revolt against that which confronts it with the imperative of divine authority, and by way of reaction against a yoke become too heavy to bear, the

outgrown law of the sacred in reference to man and to human life, to throw off this control, assert an unconditional independence and autonomy, and to seek and profess to provide from its own resources for all the needs of man.

The objection may perhaps be raised that, in all that has been so far said, it has too readily been assumed that there are in fact, and clearly recognized, the realms respectively of the secular and the sacred, and that in truth there is no such sharp delimitation of spheres as has been presupposed. At least it may be urged that the distinction, so far perhaps too readily taken for granted, is one very largely of modern thought and terminology, and has therefore only a limited logical application, but does not answer to the facts of life and of history. It is true of course that the tendency to lay stress on distinct and specialized departments of life is characteristic of the modern outlook, and that the tendency had not arisen at earlier epochs in which life was ordered and lived in its unanalysed wholeness. So much may readily be conceded; and yet it can be claimed, and is claimed, that reviewed in the perspective of history the character of an epoch, indeed of any order of society or civilization, taken as a whole, can very largely be determined by the kind and degree of value attached respectively, in that epoch and by that society, to the secular and the sacred aspects of life, as they have been earlier defined, and by the preponderance of one or the other in the estimation and in the practice of the age in question. Indeed, it can be maintained that a constant tension between the two factors is a determinant characteristic of history as a whole, and that the continually renewed challenge with which humanity is confronted is the challenge to a resolution of that tension in a synthesis which assigns its due value to each factor, secular and sacred, and subsumes them in a living unity.

The attempt to vindicate and illustrate that claim has still to be made. At this stage it can only be made in the most generalized form. It may, however, be said that, in a broad review of the past millennium, the ideal, and very largely the achievement, of the medieval period was that of bringing under the rule of God, the sacred law as embodied in the universal authority of the Church Catholic, the whole realm of human society and every activity carried on within it. It was a magnificent conception, and within its necessary limits issued in a magnificent achievement. It represented a grand endeavour, which succeeded in fulfilling its aim, so long as the social content and institutional framework of life was maintained in its own right as adequate to human demand, yet also provided material on which the sacred could lay hold, which it could assimilate, and which offered no undue resistance to its all-pervading influence; so long, in other words, as the sacred law and authority administered and exercised by the Church was not resented as intruding beyond its sphere, or as imposing a control which represented an arbitrary imposition on man's inherent freedom and creative energies.

Inevitably, however, the time came when the medieval framework of life proved too narrow for the human spirit, and when the assertion was made of a claim to a wider scope for human energies than the stereotyped feudal social structure could provide. Then the demand became urgent for a new and more elastic framework of society providing outlet for new energies and interests. And in face of this fresh assertion of the secular spirit with its legitimate demands for recognition on the one hand, and its need, and indeed its readiness, on the other to find its law of life, and its fulfilment, in a fresh acceptance of the supremacy of the sacred—in face of this new assertion the domain of the sacred, cast

in traditional moulds, was unable or unwilling to expand or modify those forms in a way which would meet the fresh demands now made upon it, and to reinterpret in terms of a new age its own claim to a dominant place in human life. Inevitably perhaps, it sought to confine the new wine in the old bottles. And the outcome was an answering recoil in the secular direction. To speak again in the most generalized terms, it must be acknowledged that the modern age as a whole has been prevailingly marked by an ever sharper assertion of the independence and self-sufficiency of the secular. It has been an age, of which perhaps to-day we are witnessing the climax, characterized by a stress upon, and an assertion of, man's unaided capacity for all things, the claim to an unconditional autonomy in this domain and that, and by an increasing tendency and determination so utterly to disown the authority and even the existence of a realm of the transcendent holy as to build a whole world, a self-complete order of society, out of secular materials, and to interpret life wholly in secular terms. While correspondingly religion, the sphere of the sacred, so far as it still has a place in man's reckoning, has been relegated to a corner or compartment of its own, on the assumption that its sole purpose is to provide for the needs of the religiously minded.

And now the wheel has come full circle. Secularism has had its day and borne its fruit. Externally at least it has succeeded in remaking man in its own image. And an age dominated by the standard of technical power and efficiency has set its stamp on human nature, and indeed on the whole body politic of Europe and the Western world. Nor has the East escaped the impact of the forces to which the West has succumbed. The uniformities of a technical order of civilization are world-wide in their range, and have broken down the natural barriers which once separated people from

people, continent from continent. And what is at stake, in the world-wide dominance of the machine, is nothing less than the survival of the integrity of the person. In an age such as ours it is the mass rather than the person which tends to count. The scale of life is so vast that the demands of efficient control and organization are paramount: and man's powers are being stretched to the limit and beyond the limit in the effort to keep pace with the demands made upon them. The outcome, in political, social and industrial terms, is the exactly-working but soulless machine which has not only become man's efficient servant, but into the likeness of which he is in danger of himself being reshaped.

Nor is this the only or the most deadly fruit of a secularist age. For it remains true that, however impressed by deliberate intention or by the necessities of the time, the machine conception of man cannot be fitted to his nature, nor can he be brought wholly within its scope and mould. He has an inherent capacity for spiritual transcendence which resists the mechanizing process. Beneath the surface of his being, subconscious if not conscious, is a world of impulse and passion demanding outlet and expression, capable, according to the appeal made to it and the forces brought to bear upon it, of being the raw material of the holy or suborned to the purposes of evil and devilry. The spiritual nature of man remains, however far he is stamped externally with the brand of the machine, latent but unquenched and unquenchable, and only awaiting an appropriate release and outlet. And if the transcendent holy, the kingdom and righteousness of God, has been disowned and banished from the field, the way lies open for the occupation of its place by the demonic forces of evil, the "spiritual hosts of wickedness."¹ And it is the dread spectacle of that

¹ Eph. vi, 12.

usurpation and its effects, on a vast scale and armed with all the powers of destruction which mechanical science has placed at its disposal, which we have witnessed in our time. Its outcome is for all to see, and represents a visible and condign condemnation of a secularist conception and ordering of human life, which rejects any sanctions of ultimate and absolute authority, and a *fortiori* excludes them from any controlling and governing place in the life of man and of human society.

Yet there is clear evidence of the recognition that the secularist revolt, characteristic of the modern age, has overshot itself, and of a widespread, even if still only half-articulated, demand for a reassertion of the traditional values of the sacred in and over the life of man. The whole structure of society, as built on the secularist basis, has cracked to breaking-point, and it is at least dimly discerned that, if civilization itself is to be saved, it can only be through the rebuilding of it on spiritual foundations, ultimately indeed on "none other foundation than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."¹ The time thus seems ripe for the re-emergence of religion from the seclusion to which it has so long been relegated, into the light of day, and for a revindication of its relevance to the secular realm. The materials of human life, in all its ranges, just because they lie around us disintegrated and shattered, are ready at hand for the sacred to lay hold of and to transmute into the elements of a Christian order of civilization in terms of our own age.

What form or forms that reassertion of the sacred in reference to the secular may take it would at this stage be premature and presumptuous to anticipate. Yet, negatively at least, this much may be said. It is not by any return to the medieval framework of life, or to the medieval method of

¹ 1 Cor. iii, 11.

resolving the tension between the secular and the sacred, that we can look for social salvation in our own day. There can be no return to a theocratic control exercised by the institutional Church over the many highly organized departments of human life. Society to-day would not tolerate anything approaching a legalistic or administrative dominance, exercised by the Church as such, over affairs which it regards as within its own competence, or spheres of organized activity which have asserted and made good the claim to autonomy. In this sense the secular has vindicated the rights which belong to it as such, and they must be respected.

What then, it would appear, is demanded is an order of society which is not an imitation of, but rather an analogue to, the ideal and achievement of the Middle Ages, a resolution appropriate to our times of the immemorial tension between the secular and sacred. That the Church as in a special sense the guardian and trustee of the sacred will have, as we shall see in greater detail in a later lecture, its necessary and indispensable part to play in that resolution may be taken for granted. But equally may it be taken for granted that that part will not be played along lines of external legalistic ascendancy, but rather along lines of an assimilative influence exercised from within. It is, indeed, only by confining the method of its dominance to such penetrating and assimilating influence that the sacred can rewin its place of supremacy in human life. It is, in fact, by such restriction that spirit is true to spirit, the sacred true to its nature. What then, it is suggested, is in demand to-day is the laying of the foundation of an order of civilization within which the secular will exercise its full and legitimate scope for self-development, but in subordination to a higher and transcendent realm, by its conscious and deliberate submission to

which it is redeemed from the forces of evil, destruction and disintegration latent within it, is liberated from the bondage of corruption, and is lifted to a higher level of potentiality and fulfilment, by moving on to and up to which it attains its destiny.

II

THE BIBLICAL PATTERN

THESE lectures are based throughout on the assumption that in the mutual relations of the secular and the sacred is to be found a master key to the meaning of history and a discriminating criterion of each and every order and epoch of society. The existence and interaction of the two realms, more particularly as they emerge in the concrete terms of a Christian social order, presuppose a clear-cut distinction between the one and the other, and at the same time a mutual kinship which points to and demands a working synthesis reconciling and uniting them. Hence the condition of such a synthesis is on the one hand that the distinction between the two realms is not pressed to the point of their mutual alienation, and on the other that it is not so completely overcome as to result in the absorption of the one realm in the other. The sacred can only then effectually fulfil its mission of informing and transforming the secular order when its primary quality of transcendent holiness is clearly recognized and at all cost preserved. Reaching down from above and beyond to touch and penetrate and subdue with its characteristic energy the raw material of nature and of human life, the sacred yet remains a realm distinct and apart from the temporal order and the transitory world, which at the same time, as that temporal order yields itself freely to its operative power, it unites with itself and raises to a higher level.

And similarly in its submission to the sanctifying energies of the divine the secular does not lose its identity or its

proper character. The reconciliation and union effected are far from amounting to the complete merging of the secular in the sacred. Rather is it true that the whole issue of the interaction of the sacred and the secular, in so far as it is rightly effected, is the enabling of the latter to come into its own and to reveal its true nature and full potentialities. Needing as it does to be brought under and subdued to the divine, the secular order has yet its own rights, its own worth, and its own reality. And the synthesis effected by the mutual relations of the two realms is thus to be tested not by the extent to which the one is lost or absorbed in the other, but that to which, within the union established, each is preserved on its own distinctive level, the sacred maintaining its quality of transcendence while penetrating and subduing the secular, and the secular retaining its own nature and identity, indeed manifesting its own character in the fulness of its value and meaning as it is brought under and taken up into the sacred.

The purpose of the present lecture is to test and justify the claim so made by reference to the Biblical record and the conception of the divine, in relation to man and to human history, by which that record is throughout and progressively governed. The Scriptural tradition of God's utterance to man and of man's response to God is concerned in the main with the origin, history and institutions of a particular community, as interpreted by its prophets and seers. Yet the assumption of the whole record, as its central strain comes into clearer evidence, is that, while Israel is the chosen recipient of the divine self-revelation, the scope of that revelation is not limited to one people but potentially is co-extensive with humanity as a whole. It would seem indeed that the destined outcome of the whole process concentrated in the history of Israel, as interpreted in the light of the divine governance, is itself a community embracing all peoples, a

Civitas Dei as wide as mankind. Thus mirrored in the Biblical record is the key to the meaning of history, not of Israel only, but of mankind.

It is, then, as reviewed in the light of holy Scripture that history as a whole, and for our purpose in particular those characteristic epochs of history of which examples will later be given, can most adequately be interpreted, and their significance adjudged. This is not, let it again be freely conceded, to rule out or deny the relative validity of other standards of interpretation than the Biblical by reference to which the significance of the historical process is sought. It is, however, to claim a peculiar decisiveness and finality for the Biblical pattern of the persistent interaction of the secular and the sacred as providing an interpretation of the whole historical process and of each historical epoch. In the concrete terms of a particular thread of history holy Scripture purports to provide the classic and regulative example of the principles which also hold good in their application to history as a whole. It is well then, indeed it is the essential presupposition of the working out of our theme, that the endeavour should be made to set in clear relief the Biblical pattern of the mutual relations of human and divine, reaching its culminating-point in the coming and Person of Jesus Christ, in whom it is affirmed by the Christian faith that manhood is taken up into and perfectly united with Godhead, before we go on to apply the supreme test thus provided to a series of characteristic and critical epochs of history.

In connection with what has been said, it is, then, not without significance that the Biblical record reaches its goal with the vision of the City of God, the ordered community of redeemed humanity. It is indeed to such a climax that the record as a whole leads up. The picture given, as the final scene of the Apocalypse, is that of the Holy City, new

Jerusalem, deriving from heaven and from God, yet planted on the earth,¹ its gates open to north and south, and east and west, through which "the glory and honour of the nations" are brought into it, from the roll of whose enfranchised citizens none are excluded on grounds of nation or race or tongue, but only those who are self-excluded by moral choice; a city illuminated by "the glory of God" and of which "the lamp is the Lamb," a city whose sons and daughters are nourished and healed by the fruit and leaves of "the tree of life," growing on either side of the river "proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" and flowing in the midst of the city. Such is the vision seen by the seer, and such the picture which he paints, a picture of which the interpretation is furnished in the proclamation from the Throne, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His peoples, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God."²

The picture is painted in the vivid idealized colours of Apocalyptic, and yet is in keeping with that "realism" which, it has been rightly said, is a marked characteristic of the Bible throughout.³ As thus the appropriate climax of Biblical revelation, it provides an ideal standard for the shaping of things present and to come. For throughout the prophetic record, given "by diverse portions and in diverse manners,"⁴ leading up to, and proceeding from, the teaching and Person of the Incarnate Lord, runs a single thread of hope and expectation and awaiting. It is the hope and expectation of a commonwealth, a community ultimately co-extensive with mankind, the ordered life of which is the expression and outcome of the acceptance of the divine will

¹ Rev. xxi-xxii, 2. ² Rev. xx, 13.

³ Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, pp. 64 f.

⁴ Heb. i, 1.

as the supreme law for man, and which in all its many-sided activities is the reflection in earthly terms of the divine Kingdom and righteousness. The City of God of Biblical hope and expectation is, then, not an exclusively transcendental realm, above the earthly sphere and beyond the limits of history. Still less, on the other hand, is it a realm of man's own creation, the product of human capacity and striving alone, the outcome of the historical process. It is rather the place at which the "righteousness"¹ which "hath looked down from heaven" meets and blends with the "truth" that "springeth out of the earth," the visible and temporal expression, in terms of community, of the acknowledgement of the divine sovereignty. It is on earth, yet comes down "out of heaven from God."² It is of heaven, yet finds its fitting and predestined embodiment on earth. It is the fulfilment, so far as fulfilment is possible under the concrete conditions of human society, of the prayer "Thy Kingdom come." It is a realm of ordered life in community, with an all-embracing scope as wide as humanity. It counts nothing genuinely human alien from it, yet is also the expression of the truth that all that is of man and of the earth contains within it the seed of corruption and decay, which will inevitably bring forth its appropriate fruit, unless the forces of destruction are countered and overcome by the forces of redemption, and the earthly realm is transmuted by subjection to the divine.

We shall be concerned later with the part which the Church as such is destined to play in the bringing in of the divine commonwealth to which, as we have seen, the Biblical record points. At this stage all that need or can be said is, if the testimony of the Scriptures be accepted, that the Church has such a part, indispensable and essential, in the

¹ Ps. lxxxv, 11.

² Rev. xxi, 2.

attainment of the consummation anticipated. Whether under the old covenant or the new, the Church, as the community of the elect called out of all humanity, is there, standing out as the visible embodiment and guardian of those sacred and supratemporal values of human life which hold good for all mankind, and are ultimately to find expression in human society as a whole. On the other hand the Civitas Dei of Biblical expectation is not identical with the Church. For while in the main the Biblical record is the story of the Church within and yet apart from the world, it yet points throughout to something greater than and beyond the Church, something which is not instrumental to the Church but to which on the contrary the Church is instrumental, a community co-extensive with mankind, through their citizenship in which all the families of the earth are to be blessed, and through its submission to the law of which humanity is to give such expression as is possible under earthly and temporal conditions to the truth which stands supremely revealed in the face of Jesus Christ.

To return, then, to the Bible, as concerned throughout with the interaction of the secular and sacred realms, with the tension between them and the final resolution of that tension. The presupposition of the whole record is the governing fact of the living God, dwelling indeed apart in His transcendent holiness, "whom no man hath seen nor can see,"¹ while yet also the self-revealing one, seeking and finding in the created order, and more particularly in man and human society, the mirror of His nature and the chosen sphere of His activity. The events of history, the institutions of society, the whole natural order of human life on all its levels, in all its phases, so far from being rejected as a sphere of bondage from which escape must be sought, as an earthly integument too gross

¹ 1 Tim. vi, 16.

for the things of the spirit, a realm of unreality to be denied as of nothing worth, are themselves the very sphere in and through which the truth of God is to be revealed, the will of God is to be done, His sovereignty and righteousness are to find expression. And while, in a world and a secular order marred and corrupted by sin, the sacred can find no final embodiment, this fact is far from robbing human life and history of positive, and indeed absolute, significance. Rather is it there as the appropriate sphere of the divine self-revelation, and yet more the sphere of the divine operation, through which as man responds to the divine demand, recognized as binding and imperative, the transcendent holiness of God is bodied forth in visible form, and His Kingdom and righteousness find expression in earthly and temporal terms.

The nature and significance of the Biblical pattern of the mutual relation of secular and sacred, as thus stated in general terms, will perhaps stand out in clearer relief, if we set alongside it a conception of that relation which stands in sharp contrast with it. And perhaps the most effective for this purpose is the conception of the relation between the divine on the one hand, and nature and man on the other, which is represented in traditional Hinduism. If in one sense it can be called a religion, as a way of approach to God, Hinduism is fundamentally a culture and a civilization ultimately based on certain metaphysical presuppositions which, tenaciously clung to and followed through to their logical outcome, set their stamp on a whole traditional order of society. Its characteristic assumption is that of the absence of any real distinction between God and nature. The divine and the natural do not stand over against each other in unresolved tension. Neither has existence apart from the other. God indeed exists, so much so indeed that nothing exists but God. God is not only *in* all that is, He *is* all that is,

and all that is is He. He is one with nature, and nature one with Him. To use the phrase in which Dr. Kraemer, the distinguished Dutch missionary and theologian, sums up the Hindu philosophy underlying the Hindu civilization, the latter is based on a "naturalistic monism"¹ which leaves no room for tension between God and man, the Creator and the creature, the divine holiness and human corruption and sinfulness. Its world picture includes no element of contrast and opposition. It knows no "absolute standard of reference"² by which man is bound. Its gods many which provide popular objects of devotion are themselves humanly-conceived and often grotesque embodiments of nature, and of the forces and passions of nature, serving indeed the purpose of providing a focus of worship, but embodying no authoritative standard of individual conduct and social behaviour.

Moreover, the social outcome of this philosophy of "acosmic idealism"³ is that of preserving unchanged from generation to generation a traditional static order of life, in which the place and destiny of each are immovably fixed from birth. Indeed religion itself is little else than "a system of practices to preserve the harmony of the social and universal order."⁴ The caste system, with its pinnacle in the Brahman, the hard-and-fast cleavage of society into rigid strata, the gulf separating which may not be passed, and the glaring inequalities which characterize it, are the outcome of and the answer to a conception of the holy and the divine according to which it serves a main purpose not of lifting human life in all its ranges to a higher level, but of riveting on society as a whole, and particularly its lower strata, an irremovable servitude, excluding any message or power of social liberation, and providing in no sense an authoritative

¹ Kraemer, op. cit., p. 156.

² Ib., p. 160.

³ Cave, *Hinduism and Christianity*, p. 174.

⁴ Kraemer, op. cit., p. 157.

working standard of social justice. For it right conduct, Dharma, is "the peculiar type of behaviour that is one's cosmically and socially predestined lot,"¹ that according to which the one unforgivable sin is that of doing "anything which implies a radical contrast, an irrevocable breaking away"² from that place in life and the whole natural order in which by birth and destiny one is set. Such is the counterpart in social terms of the traditional Hindu monistic world view, according to which the temporal order and the whole secular realm have no abiding worth, indeed no real existence, and reality is wholly identified with an abstract and impersonal absolute, which is both absorbed in all, and into which all is absorbed, and which accordingly reduces to vanishing-point that tension between the eternal and the temporal, the ever-renewed urge to the resolution of which, as we have seen, provides the texture of human history and determines the character of each age and civilization.

To such a pantheistic conception of the mutual relation of the secular and the sacred, of the divine and the world of nature and of human life, the Biblical outlook stands in the sharpest contradiction. The assumption for which it stands, and which emerges into ever clearer evidence, is emphatically not that the realm of the divine is one which disowns and repudiates, as of nothing worth, the lower world of concrete happenings and the everyday life of man. Rather is it the very nature of the divine, in terms of the Bible, to be integrated in, and to take up into itself, human life and more especially the life of a particular community. Yet immanent as its implications of the divine in relation to the human are, the distinction and tension between the two realms remains. They are not merged in one another in an undifferentiated identity. Rather does the divine provide a constant

¹ Kraemer, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

² *Ib.*, p. 164.

dynamic standard of reference by which man is judged, and constitute a power from on high by which human life, as it responds to the challenge, is raised above the natural level. No terms can be stronger than those in which the prophetic writers set forth in all its stark reality the transcendent holiness of God, His utter and complete remoteness, in Himself, from the ephemeral life of mortal man and the changing vicissitudes of history. At the same time this emphasis on the aloofness of the "high and lofty One"¹ is only expressed, sometimes with almost exaggerated force, in order to insist with greater urgency on the implications for human life of this tremendous fact, and the answer in terms of human life which it demands. The divine righteousness, while representing in one sense an absolute and unattainable standard of perfection, is only revealed and made known in order to be, and so far as it is, however brokenly and partially, embodied in the life of man and the human society.

It is indeed precisely here that is to be seen the significance of the call of Israel to be, in the Biblical world view, the people of God. The call and choice was due to the fact that there was discernible in Israel, "the fewest of all peoples,"² that which qualified her in a peculiar sense to be the bearer of the divine self-revelation, the community through the ordered life of which God was to "break into glory." The history of that people, with its advances and setbacks, its glories and its shames, so far from being a vain thing, a cycle of happenings destined to be reabsorbed into the womb of time, is interpreted by those who record it as the channel through which, once for all, the divine purpose works out towards its destined fulfilment, a fulfilment which ultimately embraces all mankind in its scope. Thus, then, on the

¹ Is. lvii, 15.

² Deut. vii, 7.

³ Adam Smith, *The Book of Isaiah*, vol. ii, p. 318.

one hand the God of the Bible is known as His nature and will are discerned in the concrete events of human history, and primarily the history of a particular community, and as on the other hand the life of man comes into its own, is then only seen in all its rich potentiality, in all its latent glory, when it is the counterpart and reflection in earthly terms of the divine Kingdom and righteousness, the sovereign will of God.

The outstanding characteristic of the Biblical pattern of life is, indeed, to be found precisely in the fact that over against the assumption and constant assertion of the one supreme reality of God, as that under which all stands and by which all is determined and governed, there is an equal insistence on the life of mankind, and particularly as that life takes shape in a particular people, and in the history of that people, as the medium of the divine self-revelation, through which the being and more especially the will and purpose of God are made known. In the expressive term not seldom used Israel is the Bride of Jahweh whom He has taken to Himself for better or for worse, and whom however unfaithful she may prove, however stern and ruthless the discipline of adversity, pressed to the breaking-point of national dissolution, to which she may be subjected, He will never cast off, bound to her as He is by an irrevocable covenant relation which cannot finally be broken, having set on her as He has the seal of the promise that through her the truth of His being and nature is to be made known to all men and His purpose for mankind ultimately fulfilled.¹ “The Kingdom shall be the Lord’s,”² such is the presupposition of the whole record; yet the very phrase is emptied of meaning unless, answering to the truth of the divine sovereignty, there is a realm of human life, an earthly commonwealth, as the sphere

¹ E.g., Is. liv, 5 ff.; Jer. iii, 14; Hos. ii, 19 f.

² Obadiah 21.

within and through which that sovereignty finds expression. The Regnum Dei is never indeed wholly to be identified with any order of human society ; yet equally true is it that it has no recognizable reality except in so far as it finds, to however limited an extent, embodiment in human life. On the other hand the converse of this truth demands constant emphasis. For if it is true, in accordance with the presuppositions of the whole Biblical record, that God is known and revealed in the concrete and particular happenings of human life and history, it is also true that the nature and potentialities of man and of human life only then stand declared as they are brought under, and into union with, the will of God.

Thus, then, the destiny of man, the goal and aim of human life, is not to win deliverance from an illusory realm of striving and doing, of events and of history, which forms the environment of his earthly course, in order to find salvation in a supratemporal realm of ultimate reality, as that which alone exists. There is, indeed, such a transcendent eternal unseen realm, and, if they are wise, men will look to it again and again for refreshment, illumination and guidance. But they will do so, not that they may achieve a final escape from the contingent present necessities of life, the historical realm in which judgment, decision and action are constantly called for, but rather that they may bring to bear on that realm the illumination which they will thus have received, and make of it the visible concrete embodiment in terms of human life and of society of the ultimate values of justice, mercy and loving kindness, as these qualities of the divine nature are seen as the final term of reference for men.

And it is in the most representative figures of the Bible, the prophetic leaders of Israel, that, men of God as they are, this tenacious cleaving to the concrete in human life and history is most conspicuously seen. The greater they are in

spiritual stature and apprehension, the more is this element of tragic tension discernible in them. Intensely aware of God as they are, their feet are yet resolutely planted on the earth. They have indeed their moments of mountain-top vision, their times of spiritual solitude in which, through one medium or another, God reveals Himself to them, and they see themselves and the world around them transfigured in the light from beyond the stars which has flashed in upon their souls.¹ And these high moments of vision, when they are alone with the Alone, are determinant of their whole being, and of the future course of their lives. And from time to time they will deliberately withdraw into solitary communion with God. Yet it is not in such moments of mystical apprehension that they see the fulfilment of their vocation, the goal towards which, leaving all else behind, they are to strive. On the contrary they never lose touch with the flesh and blood of the men and women around them. Faced by the concrete and particular situation of their time, they make no attempt to wash their hands of it, to cut themselves adrift from their historical moorings and to seek refuge apart from their temporal surroundings in a world of unseen and eternal reality. It is true that there are times when, spent in soul by the unceasing conflict, the desire to escape lies heavy on their hearts.² Even so they refuse to see in the historical predicament in which they are set a web of iron necessity in which they are caught, but from which, if they could, they would struggle out to freedom. Rather is that very predicament recognized as given them to be the subject of their message, the language of that word from God which they are called to speak. They see and proclaim God's will and purpose in terms of the events of their time. Nor is it by escaping from or repudiating particular events, but by their creative

¹ E.g., Ex. iii, 1-6; Is. vi, 1-8; Ezek. i; Dan. x, 4-11.

² Cf., Jer. ix, 2.

attitude to those events, that the prophets see and declare that men's freedom is to be achieved.

So then, however far removed they are from their contemporaries in spiritual stature, in clarity and range of vision, they never disown or cut themselves adrift from the people of their time. They pronounce judgment upon them, they condemn them with fierce and relentless directness. Not seldom are they prophets of national defeat, of national destruction and doom. They see that doom and destruction as the only outcome of the events of their time, as that which alone can embody the divine judgment, and express God's sovereign and holy will. Yet they never separate themselves from their people. They see themselves bound up, for better or worse, in the same bundle of life as their people. They enter into, and share to the end, that people's sufferings, the consequences of that people's sins.¹ And they still see in that people, or in a remnant of that people, the chosen medium of God's self-revelation, and of the fulfilment of His purpose: and conversely they ever see in God One who seeks to purchase for Himself "a people for His own possession."² However far, again and again, in the vicissitudes of history God breaks in pieces like a potter's vessel the visible and chosen instrument of His will and purpose, it is only to fashion and re-create from the fragments of the old a new instrument more pliable in the divine hands, and more responsive to the divine will. However far, again and again, Israel fails to respond to the divine choice, it is still Israel who is God's servant and through whom He will "break into glory." And this unfailingly divine purpose the prophet as unfailingly declares. It is still in the midst of his people, in the name of his people, and as one with his people, that he voices his message, whether in admonition or in comfort.

¹ Cf., Ex. xxxii, 30-34; Jer. xl, 1-6.

² Cf., Ex. xix, 3-6; Deut. xiv, 2.

Sometimes they look back to times when Israel the beloved was sought and won of God the great Lover.¹ Sometimes they look forward to the glories of the restored Israel, and a rebuilt Jerusalem.² They look both backwards and forwards for light and guidance, for warning and encouragement. But there upon them and before them all the time is the people of their time and the crisis of their time, as the very material through which the divine sovereignty is then and there to find acknowledgment in human terms and expression in human society. That which they look for throughout, and constantly proclaim in the name of the God whose word they utter, is a kingdom or commonwealth of men brought under the sovereignty of God, its life in every sphere, on every level, the answer in terms of human community to the self-revealed character of God. Here is a demand which is relentlessly made throughout, pressed in the face of the two correlative temptations to which the prophet is constantly subject, that on the one hand of contracting out from the contingent human historical environment of his time into the remote solitude of absorption in God, and that on the other of accepting the line of least resistance and identifying himself wholly with the social and moral standards of the people of his time. But neither way of escape from the tragic tension which is always upon them will the prophets accept. The two terms, the relation between which is the constant subject of their message, are God and their people. It is still and always that people, as standing under the challenge and demand which the prophet is called to articulate, which remains the ineluctable vessel of the divine choice, and the instrument of the divine purpose.

It is, then, primarily in the life of a particular community that is to be found the sphere within which the implications

¹ Cf., Hos. xi, 1.

² Cf., Is. lii, 7 ff., liv, 11 ff.; Jer. xxxi, 3 ff.

of the divine sovereignty achieve concrete expression. Yet the very nature of that revelation of God for which the prophetic record stands sets upon it the stamp of a potential universality. If that revelation finds its climax in the correlated truths of the unity and the righteousness of the divine being, then human history as a whole is the working out of the implications of ethical monotheism. The very nature of the revelation carried with it the implication that the moral values for which the God of Israel stood, and which were to find primary expression in the life of Israel, were also valid for the non-Israelite world. Israel must indeed be called out and separated from the nations of the earth, as God's peculiar people, as the trustee and guardian of the divine self-revelation, exemplifying in her own life and history the pattern of human life given in the Mount: but not that she should assert a monopoly in this revelation, but rather that through her and her witness all the families of the earth should be knit together in a world-wide community, of which the spiritual bond was the acknowledgment of a common law, given of God and recognized as possessing a binding moral authority.

These wider, and indeed universalistic, implications of the prophetic revelation failed, it is true, to find concrete expression under the conditions of the old covenant, though again and again they were voiced by the religious leaders of Israel. The hammer blows of history tended rather to throw the Jewish people back upon itself, and to foster and intensify the forces of separatism: a process the actual outcome of which took institutional shape in a stereotyped self-enclosed Judaism, the very hall-mark of which was the assertion of an exclusive spiritual prerogative and primacy for the people of one stock, and indeed for a comparative minority within that stock, based upon the written law as God's supreme

gift to His people. Yet the core of truth and its implications for humanity as a whole remained, enshrined in the Old Testament, until in the fulness of time it could be brought to light and asserted in its universal validity. And it was left for the New Testament as the record of reflection upon its central Figure, and the drawing out, by those upon whom that Figure made its primary impact, of the significance of the teaching and Person of Christ, to effect the final release of the Biblical revelation of the divine from all such restrictions as limited the scope of its implications to a single people, and to make good upon equal terms for all mankind the truth of God in relation to mankind, and of man in relation to God for which it stood.

Yet if a potential universality of range was one implication of the divine self-revelation as articulated and interpreted by the prophets in terms of history, of greater import yet was its quality and content. And it was in the term holy and holiness that this quality was most distinctively to be discerned. The God of the Old Testament was supremely "the Holy One of Israel,"¹ "great in Zion and high above all the peoples,"² "of purer eyes than to behold evil,"³ whose name was "holy and reverend"⁴: and it was the answer to the tremendous demand, which that title and its implications made, which was looked for throughout as the appropriate human response to what God had declared Himself to be. In a very real sense the challenge and promise "ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy"⁵ constituted the link which bound together from first to last the threads of the Biblical story, leading up to and from the Incarnation in which manhood, and potentially human life as a whole, is taken into God. It was the fitting structure of life for a holy

¹ Cf., Ps. lxxi, 22, lxxviii, 41.

² Ps. xcix, 2.

³ Hab. i, 13.

⁴ Ps. cxi, 9.

⁵ Lev. xix, 2; cf. 1 Peter i, 16.

community indwelt by a holy God with which the exiled Ezekiel was concerned, as he pictured the future of his people; and it was with the same community, but now universal in its citizenship, embracing in its scope the kings and nations of the earth, illuminated by the light of the divine revelation and accepting the incidence of the divine law, the answer in human terms to the holiness of God, that, as we have seen, the whole Biblical record closed. It is true that, before it could find its counterpart in human terms, holiness had first to be discerned and acknowledged as the transcendent in an absolute sense, separated from all contact or identification with the natural order and the life of man, the pure white light of God, in the presence of which man could only abase himself in awe. Indeed however far, as the implications of the revelation were unfolded, the holy emerged from behind the curtains of its hiddenness, of its transcendent aloofness, and became, in so far as there was the capacity to embody it, the supreme qualifying principle in the life of man, it never loses altogether, and cannot lose, so long as man remains what he is, not merely limited in his finiteness but "sold under sin,"¹ its primary character of the awful, the unapproachable, the remote.

It was indeed to this aspect, primary and original, of the holy that the sacrificial system under the old covenant was the constant witness. It was the expression in terms of worship of the acknowledgment of the gulf which separated not merely the creature from the Creator, but also sinful man from the holy God. It testified to the gulf, but also to the impossibility from the human side of bridging it. It pointed to the supreme divine demand, but left man deeply conscious of his inability to fulfil it. So remote indeed from all contact with human life was the conception of God with

¹ Rom. vii, 14.

which it was identified, at least in the popular mind, as to empty that conception of moral content and moral demand. It stood out of all relation to the prosaic obligations which man owed to man in the social realm. It represented a ceremonial and not a moral standard. Yet just here, in everyday contacts, in the practice of justice and considerateness in human relationships, was, as the prophets saw, to be discerned the primary demand of the divine holiness. And if the cult, by the nature of its testimony to a conception of the Deity which exalted him above and beyond good and evil, appeared to provide sanction for ignoring these obligations, then the cult itself must stand condemned. At any cost, so they reiterated, even that of the wholesale repudiation of the sacrificial worship, must the truth be vindicated that only then was the divine requirement fulfilled, when the very holiness to which the cult paid tribute found its appropriate setting in the common life of men, touching, transforming, lifting to a higher level the everyday relations of human life. If it was a case of *entweder oder*, of a choice between sacrifice and mercy, then the former must yield place to the latter.

It was indeed this tension between the divine holiness, to which the sacrificial cult bore constant testimony, and the actual life of man as ordered in everyday relationships, which constituted the tragic element in the experience of the prophets themselves, and in the life of the people as they too came under it. The tension, the breach is there, in all its stark reality, demanding resolution but failing to find it. The divine holiness could not under the conditions of the old order remain true to itself, and yet take possession of the everyday life of man, colouring, sanctifying, lifting up to God the whole varied life of humanity. There must be given and received that "something better"¹ than the old covenant

¹ Heb. xi, 40.

had provided, and within its limits could provide, the bringing in not from below, but from above, of that fulfilment in which the whole long process of divine self-revelation and human aspiration should find its goal, in which worship should find expression in work, and work itself become an act of worship, and the divine holiness no longer remain a realm remote and apart but should colour and transfigure all human life and relationships. So, then, the resolution of the tension is not to be found under the old covenant, which yet anticipates it and throughout looks towards it.

Then "not with observation,"¹ obscurely and unnoticed, in the homely terms of human circumstance, the gulf between the two realms is bridged, the breach between the sacred and the profane, the high and holy One and human life is overcome: and in the kingdom, as set forth and declared in the teaching and healing ministry of the Christ, is found the reconciling and integrating word and power. The kingdom as the term on which the teaching and ministry are focused is "not here or there,"² standing out in visible completeness for all to see. It is not a sign from heaven, dazzling and overwhelming the beholders. Still less is it the outcome and product of man's own striving and achievement. It is the common stuff of human life and experience redeemed, made new and transfigured by the divine. It is the reconciliation of heaven and earth anticipated, reached out towards, under the prophetic dispensation of the old covenant and now effected.

No rightful emphasis on the eschatological strain in the parables of the Kingdom can diminish the "integral humanism" which they illustrate. There in the seeming simplicity of scene after scene drawn from everyday life is manifested

¹ Lk. xvii, 20.

² Lk. xvii, 21.

the mystery of the Kingdom, kept in silence through times eternal and now made known, and earthly things and human life in everyday aspects are seen to have the capacity, while remaining themselves in all their concrete particularity, of carrying the impress of the divine. Sowing and reaping, the toil of the husbandman, the fisherman, the merchant, the builder, of the woman in the home, it is in these everyday activities that the Kingdom is manifested. It is from this realm that the symbols are drawn, in which is to be discerned, by those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, the purpose of the ages now at length attaining fulfilment. Nor is it only in the teaching of the Christ, it is also in the works of power that the Kingdom and its nature and potency are revealed. As manifested in the healing ministry, the Kingdom is human life as brought under the illimitable resources of divine grace, now made available in all their cleansing, healing and renewing power. The giving or restoration of bodily wholeness, as effected by the Christ, is the pledge and symbol of life delivered from the bondage of corruption and made new, of the coming and presence in power of the Messianic age, of the promised tabernacling of God with men.

And it is pre-eminently in the Fourth Gospel that the resolution of the age-long tension between the secular and the sacred realms, as that resolution is effected in terms of the Christian revelation, is exemplified. This does not mean that the Fourth Gospel by-passes the dark and destructive strain of sin and evil which runs through history and human life by any facile synthesis which ignores its stern reality. Indeed, in no Gospel, in no New Testament writing, stands out in clearer relief the stark dualism which sets over against each other the forces of life and death, light and darkness, good and evil. Yet the dualism is only stated in order over against it to declare that there is now present a power by

which it is surmounted: a power in the strength of which the darkness, in which the light shines, does not overtake it, and is itself overcome, by which the forces of destruction and death are conquered by those of life, by which, though "the whole world lieth in the evil one,"¹ it can be, indeed has been, rescued and redeemed from the bondage of corruption and brought under the transfiguring light of the divine presence.

It is indeed perhaps in the term transfiguration that there is best expressed the character and effect of the coming of Christ into the world as the author of the Fourth Gospel sees it. The presence and person of the Incarnate Lord are the pledge and exemplar of a sacramental union in which the two realms of the secular and the sacred find their point of contact and reconciliation with each other. In the light and power of the Word made Flesh humanity and human life are seen as made new. The concrete world of things, of human relationships, of history, is not rejected as past redemption, but is declared as the very sphere in and through which the divine glory is manifested. The "beginning of His signs,"² wrought at Cana of Galilee, occupies, perhaps, its place of primacy in the Gospel, just because it is so supremely illustrative of all that Christ came to be and to do, in accepting and taking the common stuff of human nature and human life, and revealing its capacity for embodying and manifesting the divine. Yet illuminating and significant as they are it is not on the signs, or the teaching of the Christ, it is on His Person that the Fourth Gospel concentrates the main attention of the reader. It is there in the Incarnate Lord, the Christ Himself, that the reconciliation of the two realms is finally effected, manhood is taken into God, and the eternal purpose foreshadowed and anticipated in many parts and

¹ Jn. v, 19.

² Jn. ii, 11.

manners under the prophetic dispensation finds its ultimate fulfilment.

Hence for the Fourth Gospel, as for the accompanying document, the First Epistle of John, the supreme falsehood, the very mark of the Anti-Christ, is the denial of the Incarnation, of Jesus Christ come in the flesh.¹ And it was by a true instinct that the Church discerned and seized upon the truth of the Person of Christ as the battleground on which must be fought out and vindicated the issues which were of quite vital importance for humanity and for human life: compelled indeed to this contest and vindication by denials of or attacks on that truth designed to evade its implications both for the individual and for human society. The long-drawn controversy for the integrity of the one Christ, true God and true man, was, however little recognized at the time, concerned with issues of fundamental importance in their bearing on human life and society. It was not merely for the truth in its metaphysical aspect, as concerned with the nature of ultimate reality, that the Church was contending. Nor again was it only the conditions on which the hope and need of individual redemption could be made good which were involved. It was also and equally the nature of human history, the basis and texture of human society, as viewed in the light of the Christian revelation, which was being decided as the outcome of the controversy.

It is indeed from this standpoint that the danger of the Gnostic penetration of the Church, and the Church's ultimate rejection of the Gnostic world view, can be judged. For the common presupposition of Gnosticism was the utter and complete disparity which existed between the divine and human, between God and nature. The supreme Deity of Gnostic speculation was by his very nature wholly and per-

¹ Cf. I Jn. ii, 22 f.; iv, 2 f.

manently removed from all contact with the earthly and the material. Salvation consisted not in the redemption or transfiguration of the latter, but in its denial and abandonment by the elect, to whom through knowledge the way of escape had been opened. Thus the whole natural order, including human society itself, was repudiated as inherently evil, and as subject to no vital principle of moral redemption or integration capable of transforming it. For the Gnostic and the assumptions on which his world view was based, there could be no taking of manhood into God, no assumption of the flesh by the Word, no Incarnation, and hence no redemption of the natural and the earthly from those inherent forces of corruption, which so long as it was left to itself unsubdued to and without contact with any cleansing, renewing, and quickening power were bound to work havoc in man's life individual and social.

Hence both under the impact of the subtle assaults of Gnostic speculation and of later evasions of the scriptural and catholic doctrine of the Incarnation, evasions indeed pressed in deference to the claims of logical consistency as made by the great heresiarchs, the Church's insistence on holding fast the godhead and the manhood in the one Person of Christ, and on rejecting any definition of His Person which emphasized the one at the expense of or to the exclusion of the other. The Chalcedonian formula, in which the prolonged controversy found its outcome, served the vitally important purpose not of providing a final or satisfying definition of the Person of Christ, but of stating side by side the truths for which room must be found in any such definition: and in so doing it was not only providing the material for a dogmatic formulation of the truth in question, but also an ultimate principle of social integration. For it is to the Christ, the truth as it is in Jesus, the Christ of the Gospels and of the Catholic

Creeds, that reference must constantly be made by those who are looking for a final touch-stone of history and of civilization. The divine commonwealth of Biblical hope and expectation can find concrete embodiment to the degree in which, in terms of the social structure of human life, it is the counterpart of the Word made Flesh.

III

THE GREAT ANTINOMY

WE have now considered, in general terms, the nature of the two realms, the secular and the sacred, and their mutual relation and interaction in the concrete structure of human life: and we have seen that where, and in so far as, the tension between the two realms finds its resolution in Christian terms, the outcome is an order of society, which on the one hand provides scope and freedom for the “vitalities,” to use Dr. Niebuhr’s expressive phrase, of human nature, and for the complex movements and institutions in which those vitalities find outlet and expression, and at the same time recognizes as the integrating principle of its unity, as that in the light of which and by the acceptance of which it attains significance and brings to fruition its latent potentialities, a transcendent “kingdom and righteousness,” a revealed law divine, finding supreme expression in the Person of Jesus Christ. And embodied in the Biblical record, itself culminating in the Incarnation and the Incarnate life, we have discerned and sought to set in clear relief a pattern of life, of which one main strand (the dominating presupposition of the whole) is the fact of God, “the King eternal, incorruptible, invisible,”¹ “the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity,”² transcendent above time and the temporal order, and the other main strand are the vicissitudes and contingencies of history, the two strands finding their reconciliation and union in an ordered community governed by the divine law

¹ 1 Tim. i, 17.

² Is. lvii, 15.

and potentially world wide, the answer in human terms to the revealed being and will of God.

It is indeed in the Biblical conception of the kingdom or realm of God and its implications that we can best, perhaps, find the regulative idea of which we are in search. It is a conception which, whether expressly so termed or not, dominates the Old Testament, and in particular governed the minds of its seers and prophets both in their interpretation and judgment of current events, and in their anticipation of the future. It was taken up and laid hold of by our Lord, and, liberated from unworthy accretions which had gathered round it, made the pivot of His teaching, teaching given in the language not of general principles, but that of homely proverbial sayings and of the concrete details of everyday life. The kingdom as declared and proclaimed by Christ, the kingdom above all as constituted in His Person, was and is an order of ultimate reality, deriving from above, belonging to the unseen and eternal realm, yet integrated into, pervading, redeeming, transfiguring the whole this-worldly sphere of the contingencies of history and of the life of man. And it is now our task to apply this pattern and regulative principle, thus generally stated, to a succession of characteristic epochs of history, with a view, in our concluding lecture, to evaluating in the light of it the potentialities of our own pregnant age.

The title which we have selected for this lecture, the Great Antinomy, is borrowed from Benjamin Kidd's *Principles of Western Civilisation*,¹ and will serve perhaps as well as any other to sum up in a single phrase the result of the breach which Christianity stood for and effected in the classical conception of man and of human society, and the far-reaching, and indeed revolutionary implications which, as

¹ Chs. viii, 1 f.

its nature was revealed and its influence was felt, Christianity was seen to carry with it. It broke into the old one-level order, rooted in immemorial tradition, not indeed with the denial of that order or of the secular as such, but with the proclamation of a new conception of the sacred and of the relation of the sacred to the secular. It rescued the sacred from absorption in the secular, and constituted it a transcendent realm in its own right, no longer immersed in and subject to, but paramount over, the temporal order. It stood for that for which no place was found or could be found in terms of the social philosophy or practice of the classical age, a realm of eternal values, of sanctions ultimate and absolute, a divine imperative, to which an allegiance beyond all allegiances was owed by man, which formed indeed the criterion by which both man himself and all human institutions, however sacrosanct, were to be judged, and provided a final standard into conformity with which, so far as was possible under earthly conditions, those institutions were to be brought. It is the impact of the new world view on the old, of Christianity upon all that was summed up in *Romanitas*, to which we have now to call attention.

Classical civilization, Greek and Roman, was of the secular this-worldly type. It was not of course that the sacred had no place in it. On the contrary the sacred, and the institutions in which the sacred found embodiment, filled, as we shall see, a dominant and all-pervading rôle in ancient society. Yet this fact did not affect the limitation of its outlook to interests of temporal concern. Philosophy might postulate an ideal realm as constituting ultimate reality. Religion might enter into and colour every human activity, private and public. Yet neither the one nor the other served effectively to modify the dominant secular conception of man and of society. There was no effective recognition of a realm of

supra-temporal values as that under which all life stood and to which all human institutions were to be conformed.

And not only was the prevailing classical outlook bounded by the concerns of this world. It was further limited by the State, the polis, of which the individual was a citizen. "What has to be noted,"¹ it has been said, as characteristic of ancient society, "is the complete absence of that assumption, deep, potent and all-pervading in its effects, which underlies all the outward standards of the civilization of our time—the assumption that, in the last resort, the life of the individual is related to ends and principles which entirely transcend the objects for which the political organization around us itself exists." We quote this sentence, it is pertinent to note in passing, from a book which was published in 1902, at a time when the liberal tradition of Europe still held the field and seemed destined to prevail. It could not have been written forty years later. For within our own generation we have lived through and witnessed an organized attempt on a gigantic scale to give the lie to Benjamin Kidd's assertion as to the accepted assumption on which "the civilization of our time" is based: an attempt to set back the clock of history, to deny in practice and in theory that there are "ends and principles which entirely transcend the objects for which the political organization exists," to which the life of the individual is related, and to which his ultimate allegiance is due, and to cramp and confine the life and mind of man within the limits set by the State. Yet the very outcome of the attempt, issuing as it has in the great darkness of the moral and social chaos of our time, is more than enough to demonstrate that the clock of history cannot be put back, and that modern man cannot, even if he would, repudiate with impunity his Christian past, and return to

¹ Kidd, *Principles of Western Civilization*, p. 190.

the one-level secular order of society as it prevailed in the ancient world.

That ancient world rested on the assumption that the scope of man's life, and the standards of his behaviour, were defined and prescribed for him through his membership in a particular community, whether that community was comprised within the four walls of a city State or was coterminous with an Empire. Fundamentally the classical order of society was based on the "institution of exclusive citizenship."¹ It was in terms of his citizenship that the individual himself, and the nature and ends of human life, could alone be adequately defined. Primarily and essentially man was a being embraced within the scope and meaning of the Polis. The particular civic community into which the individual was born, and to which he belonged body and soul by descent and affinity of blood, formed from birth till death the sphere within which all his rights, all his obligations and all his interests were comprised.

It was, then, characteristic of the classical age that, to quote again, "the entire consciousness in its outward expression was related to activities bounded in their aim by the horizon of the existing political organization."² This, for example, was supremely true of that most outstanding expression and embodiment of the classical spirit, the Augustan peace and the Augustan Empire, representing as they did on the part of a supreme master of statecraft "a herculean effort to solve the problems of his age in terms consistent with the thought and aspiration of classical antiquity."³ It was still in terms of the Polis, however far geographically extended, and of the Roman political tradition, of which he saw himself the inheritor and trustee, that

¹ Kidd, op. cit., p. 158.

² *Ib.*, pp. 173 f.

³ Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, p. 3.

Augustus looked to find a satisfying interpretation of human life and destiny, and a secure basis of human society. And achievement appeared to match conception. The master plan, designed by Augustus in keeping with the Latin, as against the Eastern political, tradition took concrete shape before men's eyes, providing a framework of order, security and peace throughout the civilized world: and it is not too much to say of his achievement, as has been said of *Romanitas* as a whole, that it represents "in many ways still the most impressive secular system ever constructed by human hands."¹ It is equally true, as events were to prove, that in spite of its grandeur as a triumph of far-seeing practical statesmanship, and its proved success over a long period, there was something lacking in the structure of the Augustan Empire, the need for which made its presence felt with increasing urgency as the years and centuries passed.

It was brought home by the inexorable pressure of events that human nature and human society made demands which could not be satisfied on the political level alone, and presupposed a wider background, moral and spiritual, than the Empire, with its efficient administration and with its official cult of *Roma et Augustus*, could provide. The *Polis*, however all-embracing in its scope and however well ordered, could not, it was proved, furnish a final home for the human spirit. God had "created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of his own eternity,"² and an institution related only to temporal interests was inadequate to the most fundamental of human needs. For of the Empire, as of the classical tradition to which it sought to give final form, it was still characteristic that it was essentially of the one-level order of life and civilization. For it, the State and membership of the State still purported to prescribe for man the one

¹ Cochrane, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

² *Wisd. ii, 23.*

finally authoritative standard of conduct, the one final criterion of what was fitting or unfitting, lawful or unlawful. And as such, it did not and could not make provision for sanctions, ethical and social, which rested on the recognition of a realm of transcendent values, to which in the last resort all temporal interests were subordinated. It represented the culminating expression of that long epoch in which, it has been maintained, "humanity itself, however efficient its purposes, however splendid its achievements, however transforming its genius, is yet, as it were, without a soul."¹

It might have been supposed that, if no other independent department of life was effective for the purpose, religion at least would assert a claim of detachment from the one-level order, and would point with authority to a realm of values and sanctions, absolute and universal in character, obligatory beyond any man-erected State-made conceptions of duty, a realm to which the State itself would in its policy and administration at least profess respect. For nowhere but in religion could be found an outlet from the closed imperium constituted by a society organized on the basis of exclusive citizenship and wholly directed to ends of State. Yet such was not the rôle which the religion of the classical age was regarded as filling or was qualified to fill. It was not, of course, that religion did not have an acknowledged, indeed a preponderating place in the life of man and of society. Indeed it entered into the life of men both public and domestic, in a way and to a degree to which even the medieval period in Christian history hardly presents a parallel. Yet "gods many and lords many"² though there were, to whom regard and worship were accorded, religion made no claim to represent an independent standard of judgment upon men and upon human affairs based upon

¹ Kidd, op. cit., p. 193.

² 1 Cor. viii, 5.

principles of universal validity, or effectively to modify the closed-imperium standpoint which governed the thought and practice of the ancient world.

For large as was the place which religion occupied in ancient society, it fell within, and not without, the closed imperium within which the life of man was confined. It was subordinated to the secular ends to which society and the State were directed: and its deliverances and judgments were only recognized and tolerated so long as they stopped short of the proclamation of a second and higher level of actuality, of a kingdom beyond, of a realm of moral absolutes claiming an implicit and ultimate obedience, an obedience which might even involve a defiance and repudiation of the demands of the State. Indeed, to appeal to a higher law than that of the State was itself the supreme *impietas*, and, as we shall see, it was on the ground of the *impietas* of vindicating the existence and claims of such a higher law that the official persecution of Christianity was based.

Indeed, so far from representing an independent and supremely authoritative standard of character and conduct, or proclaiming principles of ultimate validity by which society should be governed, religion was itself a department of State. Its priesthoods, its institutions, its sacrificial rights fell within, and not without, the sphere with which the State was concerned. It served exclusively the purpose of supplying a spiritual cement for the structure of a community organized for political ends. It thus provided no outlet from, indeed it went far towards underpinning and hardening, that one-level world view, that closed-imperium outlook, that regard beyond all else for the State, and for the preservation of the existing order of society as governed and organized by the State, which we have seen was a main characteristic of the classical world, Greek and Roman.

In spite, then, of the prominent part which religion played in the ancient world, that world was organized on the assumption "that no human interest was recognized as transcending the interest of the existing social order."¹ Its unquestioned presupposition was that man's life was wholly confined within the temporal, and that his outlook, his character and his destiny were wholly determined by his membership of a particular community. The basis on which it rested was such as to exclude any reference to a sacred authority transcending that of the State and unconditional in its demands. The sacred was in evidence, as we have seen, in every sphere of life public and private: but it fell within and not without the secular field. In relation to the secular the sacred carried with it no implication of an authority absolute and divine, nor did it claim to assert an independent and universally valid standard by which public policy and the realm of social relationships should be governed. It was subordinated to, rather than transcendent over, the secular and the secular conception of life and of society. It consolidated, rather than provided a constant standard of judgment upon, the existing order of things. It was the handmaid rather than the mistress of human life as organized for ends of State.

And it was into this one-level secular order of thought and life, confining within the limits of the existing State, and its accepted structure and policy, the allowable scope for the satisfaction of human need and demand, that Christianity broke with its authoritative proclamation of an eternal order, an other-worldly supratemporal realm of ultimate values beyond, and higher than, those which the community as organized on a secular basis could recognize. It postulated a conception of man, and by implication of human society,

¹ Kidd, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

for which neither the philosophy nor the practice of the ancient world could make provision, a conception which, as its practical social implications gradually became evident, was found to constitute both a standing judgment upon, and a serious if subtle menace to, the existing order of society and to the basis on which the whole social structure was founded. As the centuries passed, and Christianity grew both in consciousness of the implications of its faith and in institutional strength, it came to be recognized that, as has been said, "it embodied ingredients of a highly explosive character, sufficient indeed to shatter the already weakened faith in classical ideals and thus to empty the system of whatever meaning it still possessed."¹

Inevitably therefore, as those implications in the social and civil spheres became evident, it was opposed by those who stood for the existing order, with its age-long tradition, its vast extent and its apparent effectiveness, with every weapon of resistance available. Instinctively it dawned on the minds of men, both within and without the Church, that ultimately no truce or compromise was possible between the old and the new, between the classical and the Christian conceptions of man and of society. Once for all Christianity, by the very nature and contents of its gospel, abrogated the one-level dimension on which hitherto life had been conceived and lived. It laid bare a fissure in the nature of man, as hitherto conceived, which was never again to be wholly closed. It revealed man as divided against himself, a creature of two worlds, two loyalties and not one only. It proclaimed a second and higher world of values unconditional and ultimate in their claim on man's allegiance. At the same time, this unseen and eternal realm was not proclaimed as that with which alone religion was concerned, or merely as a

¹ Cochrane, *op. cit.*, p. 356.

place of escape and refuge from the vicissitudes and illusions of this world. Had this been all, the scandal and offence of Christianity would have been done away. Rather did it assert that that higher and eternal realm provided a constant standard of reference for the temporal order, constituted an incisive and transforming force in relation to all earthly things, and embodied a manifestation of the sacred which had for its purposed outcome the subsuming under and within it of the whole domain of secular affairs.

And here lay a fundamental differentiation of Christianity from the mystery cults of the early centuries of our era: a differentiation so profound and so far-reaching in its practical bearing on society that, as the character of each came to be recognized, it became increasingly clear that Christianity could not find, and indeed would repudiate, a place as one among the licit cults sanctioned by the State. The mysteries did, indeed, succeed in meeting a widely felt need of the age. They set out to provide for the individual a way of escape from the bondage of fate, and the tyranny of demons, indeed a way of escape from mortality itself. They provided an outlet for a widespread sense of frustration, of the futility of life, in a disillusioned age. And they did something to lift their devotees from total imprisonment in the things of time. At the same time, unlike Christianity, they did not cut across or threaten or impair the accepted State-governed outlook, the closed imperium within which life was organized. Concerned as they were with the other world to the exclusion of this, they made no claims which were incompatible with that State-governed outlook, or even with its official religious safeguards and sanctions. They made no authoritative demands affecting the existing framework of life and of society. They carried with them no implications the recognition of which would cut into and cut across the

established order. Least of all did they proclaim a second and higher realm, a kingdom not of man but of God, the recognition and coming of which would be not merely a private cult, a way of escape for the individual from servitude to the temporal order, but would involve the cleaving of a deep fissure in that order, and indeed the whole recasting of society on another basis and on wholly other principles than those traditionally acknowledged.

On the other hand it was just here, in the social implications of the faith and doctrine of Christ, that the differentiating quality and, from the standpoint of the established order, the danger of Christianity was seen to lie. Like the mystery cults it was other-worldly in proclaiming through its Lord the conquest of the demons and of death. Like them it claimed to open the way to immortality. But unlike them it did not leave that other world, that kingdom beyond, in the air, wholly unrelated to the things of this world. Rather it claimed that in that kingdom, as Christ proclaimed it and as Christ embodied it, were to be found those supremely authoritative and regulative principles which should receive increasing application in the ordering of this life and of society here and now, and in every age. It was indeed just this demand, implicit in Christianity, which gradually yet with growing distinctness was seen to constitute a menace to the existing order. Slowly but surely it loomed on the perception of the ancient world that it could not come to terms with Christianity and yet retain its traditional philosophy, particularly as that philosophy bore on the structure of society. It came, moreover, ever more clearly to be recognized that the new faith could not, if it was consistent with itself, limit the scope of its application to the Church, in which it found immediate corporate expression, but claimed a wider application to the social sphere as a

whole. It was nothing short of revolutionary in its social implications and in its transvaluation of all accepted values. Hence the recognized need, if the established order was to be maintained, of meeting the peril with every weapon at the State's command, and primarily with the weapon of force.

It is, of course, true, and it is necessary to emphasize the truth, that the revolutionary character of the new way in its bearing on social principle and practice was not at first perceived or understood either by the secular world or by the Church itself. At first and for a considerable period self-preservation was the one law of the Church's life. Its one concern was not to affect or influence, still less to subdue and remould, pagan society as such, but to maintain itself, its own quality of life and fellowship, its purity and discipline, within, and as far as might be apart from, its pagan environment. It was compelled at first to concentrate on the one task of carving out for itself and maintaining an enclave of Christian life and fellowship within the community to which its members belonged, of fashioning, on however limited a scale, a kingdom of God within the kingdom of Cæsar, and of building up a disciplined corporate life within that inner kingdom. And its primary purpose in doing so was not that of making an impact on the social life and standards of its pagan environment, but rather of preparing a people made ready for the coming of the Lord. At this early stage its outlook was through and through otherworldly. Its ethic was of the heroic eschatological interim character befitting those for whom the new age had already come, and only awaited its full and visible consummation. The primary concern, then, of the Christian was with himself and the beloved community, called out of the world, of which he was a member, and with pagan society only in so

far as it was a realm of corruption from which he must hold himself detached, and out of which one here or there might be rescued and brought into the light and life of the fellowship of Christ.

It was thus only as Christianity grew in strength, corporate expression and, above all, in consciousness of its doctrinal implications that its radical potentialities and demands in the social realm were appreciated by the imperial authorities or by the Church itself. Once perceived indeed, every attempt through the exercise of force or by more subtle means was made to counter, or turn the edge of, the peril which the new religion constituted. It is true that the earlier persecutions did not presuppose an awareness on the part of the State of the breach constituted by Christianity in the closed imperium for which the State stood. They were not directed to meeting a danger which was seen to threaten the whole traditional classical conception of life and of society. They were rather explosions of popular or imperial passion than calculated instruments of State policy. And even when Christianity was declared a *religio illicita*, it is questionable whether the edict banning it was prompted by a sense of a serious threat to the very foundations of the established order. Trajan's directions to Pliny during the latter's governorship of Bithynia and Pontus, early in the second century, betray no consciousness of such a threat: and over considerable periods the edict, as a potential weapon, was kept in abeyance, and when enforced was directed against individuals, test cases, rather than against the Christian community as a whole.

Yet, even at that early stage, the selected method of applying the edict, through the test of the acceptance or refusal of Caesar worship, showed clearly enough in what quarter there was an instinctive sense of public danger.

For the cult of Augustus et Roma was the deliberately adopted and supreme expression, in the religious sphere, of precisely the traditional character and basis of the Roman State. The refusal of the practice of that cult, even on the part of an individual, cut into the conception of exclusive citizenship on which the State was based. It constituted a crack, however insignificant, in the cement which held the imperial structure together, and must, in deference to the supreme overriding interest of constituted order, be punished accordingly.

But as the third century took its course, the inherent weakness of the Augustan imperial order itself was revealed with growing prominence. Fundamentally that weakness showed itself not as a breach in the administrative fabric of Empire, but as "a moral and intellectual failure," "a failure of the Graeco-Roman mind,"¹ a widespread spiritual disillusionment. And to meet a spiritual debacle, of which the evidence was patent for those who had eyes to see, the Empire had no spiritual resources at its disposal. It could only fall back on an ever more rigid and uniform system of imperial government. It was, at least, along this line that at the close of the century the attempt was made by Diocletian at "salvaging the poor remains of Romanitas," by the institution of "a bureaucratic and militarized regime,"² which concealed rather than healed the disease of the body politic. It represented a last attempt, on traditional classical lines, to limit the horizon of men's outlook and interest to the State. And it was a regime which by its own nature was totalitarian in its scope. The last thing, therefore, that it could brook was the presence of an imperium in imperio: and as such with its steady growth in numbers and influence the Christian community inevitably appeared. There could

¹ Cochrane, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

² *Ib.*, p. 151.

accordingly be no room for Christianity, and for the Christian conception of life and its expression, within the Empire of Diocletian's plan. Either it or that Empire must go. Hence the adoption of a policy "which made the extermination of the Christians inevitable,"¹ and the deliberate, and, as it proved, final attempt, to eradicate the standing peril represented by the Church through a general and indiscriminate persecution.

The attempt failed: and the proved failure of the method of force and of the attempt to crush Christianity out of existence, and thus drastically to roll back the onset of the danger which it constituted to the classical conception and the classical ordering of the State, was followed on the part of Constantine and his successors by a subtler method of turning the edge of what to them, too, was a threat to the great tradition. Persecution was succeeded by the revocation of the ban on Christianity as a *religio illicita*, and by its gradual adoption as the religion of the Empire. Constantine perceived the need as clearly as Augustus had done so three centuries earlier of a religious basis for the imperial idea and the imperial structure. At the same time he saw equally clearly that he could no longer look to the old gods to provide that religious basis. Such, however, might well be the service which Christianity could render. He might calculate on finding in it just that "fresh principle of political integration"² which the exigencies of the time and State required. In his rise to supreme power it had already shown itself a "success-philosophy."³ Adopted as the religion of State, it might well prove "a talisman of virtue by which Romanitas would be assured of material prosperity such as official paganism had failed to give it,"⁴ the necessary adjunct

¹ Cochrane, op. cit., p. 175.

³ *Ib.*, p. 184.

² *Ib.*, p. 215.

⁴ *Ib.*, p. 215.

in the religious sphere, which he needed in the gigantic task of reorganization to which he was committed. His task was a political one, nothing less than the salving and rehabilitation of the Empire. It was from this angle that he viewed and weighed the factors of his time, including not least the growing influence and penetrating power of Christianity. He saw in it "a force calculated to invigorate the state,"¹ "a tonic to be administered in carefully regulated doses to the debilitated body politic."²

Beyond this perhaps neither his outlook nor his intentions went. To have inaugurated a Christian commonwealth, on the lines followed by Charlemagne five hundred years later, would have demanded far more than Constantine was prepared, or under the circumstances was able, to conceive. The far-reaching implications for the social life of man of the formulation of doctrine reached at Nicæa hardly dawned on his vision: and in so far as he may have discerned them, he was assuredly unready to give them practical expression. To have done so would have meant not the rehabilitation of the imperial structure but its rebuilding from the ground upwards. He contented himself therefore with daubing the fabric of Empire with the untempered mortar of an imperfectly understood Christianity. He went indeed so far as to promulgate a number of enactments affecting the social practice of his time, which bear the undoubted stamp of the new religion of his adoption. Beyond this he did not, and, perhaps, could not, go: and he saw to it that, by according Christianity official recognition and by taking it under the imperial patronage and control, it was kept in the place which he assigned to it, a limited place which in practice still left Romanitas in its traditional form undisputed master of the field.

Yet, even so, orthodox Christianity proved an awkward

¹ Cochrane, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

² *Ib.*, p. 336.

bed-fellow to the traditional closed imperium of the Roman State. And if Constantine himself wavered in his adherence to and maintenance of the Nicene faith and formula, as its practical implications came into clearer evidence, his Arian successors discerned the peril yet more clearly and found their refuge from it, not in the repudiation of Christianity but in its adoption in a perverted and diluted form. The Arianism for which Constantius and Valens, and even to some extent Constantine himself,¹ stood enabled these Emperors to reconcile the title and style of Christian with the traditional outlook and the traditional order. As "a heathenized form of Christianity," based upon a conception of deity which explicitly excluded the possibility of the taking of mankind into God in the person of the Son and for which the Son was "not the essence of the Father, but a creature essentially like other creatures,"² indeed neither true man nor true God, Arianism left unbridged the gulf which in pagan thought separated as by an impassable barrier the divine and the human, God and the visible world both of nature and of man, and thus provided a convenient cloak for those who needed it under which the old order could be retained intact in all that mattered, and yet at the same time could claim the sanction of Christianity. For not yet, not even with the accession to power of the genuinely orthodox Theodosius, had an imperial ruler come to the throne prepared to face all that was involved in the acceptance of the Nicene Faith, and for the sake of implementing a new and genuinely Christian order of society to make the necessary inroad on the very foundations of the structure of

¹ Cf., Gwatkin, *Studies of Arianism*, p. 37: "Christianity to him was nothing more than a monotheistic heathenism. Arianism, therefore, came up to his ideal of religion, and he could not see what was lacking in it."

² *Ib.*, p. 24.

Empire as they had inherited it in its traditional Roman form.

It was not that the orthodox Emperors were insincere in their adherence to the Catholic faith, or for the sake of implementing it as the religion of the Empire were unready to make far-reaching legislative and administrative changes in the structure of Empire, and in the relations of the Church to the State. Such changes were indeed inaugurated by Constantine, and within their limitations carried further by Theodosius. Yet for both, the faith essentially stood for a principle of political cohesion ; for both it was thought of as subserving “a definitely social and economic function”¹ : and it was in the hope of “imparting fresh vitality to the Roman order”² that the changes were made, changes in externals which were all too readily acclaimed by the Church and its leaders as an adequate assurance of a Christian and Christianized Empire. For out-standing Churchmen like Ambrose, no less than Emperors and statesmen, were above all concerned with the integrity and maintenance of the fabric of the Empire, as the ordered habitation of civilized mankind, with Christianity in its institutional form and with its privileged status as providing its religious sanction and guarantee.

And indeed so long as that fabric held, with whatever inroads upon it, life still tended to be interpreted in terms of exclusive citizenship and to be bounded and limited by ends of State. In substance the root conception of Romanitas still held the field. It required indeed two events, the one on the open field of the world, the other in the withdrawn sphere of thought and its philosophical expression, to drive home the full meaning and implications of the Christian faith as yet unrecognized by either Church or State. The one was the

¹ Cochrane, *op. cit.*, p. 356.

² *Ib.*, p. 318.

overwhelming disaster which befell the structure of the Empire itself in the early years of the fifth century, when, to use the sonorous language of Gibbon, "eleven hundred and sixty-three years after the foundation of Rome, the Imperial city, which had subdued and civilized so considerable a part of mankind, was delivered to the licentious fury of the tribes of Germany and Scythia."¹ The other was the composition and publication of the *De civitate Dei*. For centuries it had been the accepted basis of the life of mankind that the very destiny of man was bound up with the indestructibility of Rome and of the Empire. It was this which, as we have seen, had for so long and so completely provided the horizon of man's outlook and the supreme end to which his life was directed. It was inevitable therefore that, when that Empire fell, the horror of a great darkness overwhelmed the spirit of man, reducing him either to despair or to angry recrimination against the God who had ousted the old gods, the new religion which displacing the old had proved itself impotent to save mankind.

And what needed to be demonstrated in the very light of these terrific events, in which not only the old order of society but the old way of thought was broken up, was the truth that the "removing of those things that are shaken"² only served to bring into clearer relief the abiding character of "those things which are not shaken." It was Augustine's crowning achievement not only to rebut the charge that the adoption of Christianity was responsible for the downfall of the Empire, but to show that it was wholly to mistake the nature of Christianity to look to it, in the Constantinian sense, as a "religion of success," as itself involved in and pledged to any existing social and political order, however ancient and sacrosanct. He gave philosophical expression to

¹ *Decline and Fall*, ch. xxxi.

² Heb. xii, 27.

the truth that in the light of the Christian revelation exclusive citizenship of an earthly Polis did not and could not comprise the whole life of man on its individual or its social side, and that he was the heir and possessor also of a "citizenship in heaven," that he had his roots in a higher super-earthly order, and that it was with this rather than with his membership of an earthly state that his destiny was bound up.

In the *De civitate Dei* history as a whole is viewed and reviewed in the light of the conception of the two societies, the members of the one concerned with the earthly, of the other with the heavenly peace, societies not clearly separable on the plane of the here and now, but destined to be visibly and tragically separated in their respective destinies hereafter. Here throughout is the master idea and the connecting link, which runs through a bewildering variety of subjects brought within the scope of what even for Augustine can be called his magnum opus during the thirteen years covered by its composition. Containing as it does much philosophy and still more history, it is far from being primarily a philosophical dissertation or the work of an historian writing as such. It has throughout a practical and apologetic purpose, the demonstration in the light of history, Biblical and post-Biblical, sacred and profane, of the existence of "a better country, that is, a heavenly"¹ at a turning-point of history when under the impact of an overwhelming catastrophe men's hearts were "fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world."²

The prevailing outlook of the work is, accordingly, otherworldly and eschatological, an outlook governing the whole and finding concentrated expression in the concluding books on the last things. It is not, then, with social reconstruction,

¹ Heb. xi, 16.

² Lk. xxi, 26.

following on the collapse of the traditional fabric of human society, that the writer is concerned. Directly at least it is not his purpose to lay the foundations of a new and Christian order of civilization to replace the shattered and riven *Pax Romana*. Looking back on the man and on his work, we see in him and in it both the gulf which divides and the bridge which links, the classical and the medieval worlds. Nor can there be any question that the moulds into which were cast the forms of medieval culture and civilization were largely of Augustine's fashioning. But in so far as this is true, it was an indirect result, in no sense due to conscious planning for the future on his part. For him the world, and the whole temporal order, was passing away before his eyes and the eyes of his generation, passing away not to give place to a new and alternative shape of human society but to an eternal order unshaken and abiding in the heavenlies, of which all were heirs who under the conditions of this age loved God to the contempt of self.

Yet to say so much is far from discounting the contribution which in fact, if not in intention, the *De civitate Dei* made to the medieval world view and to the social structure in which it found expression. It fulfilled effectively under the conditions of the transition epoch at which it was written a necessary task of preparing the way for what was to come. It served the purpose of shattering and discrediting the closed-imperium conception which governed the structure and life of classical society. By its doctrine of man, by its review of history, and above all in the light of the Incarnation and of the Christian conception of God, it revealed the untruth and insufficiency of any world view which purported to comprise all human life and interests within the temporal order, and more particularly within the political organisation of the State. This contribution, in some respects perhaps a

negative one, of shattering the classical outlook which had survived even the official conversion of the Empire to Christianity, had first to be made before its far-reaching implications in the social realm could find practical expression or philosophical justification. That God, holy and true, was not tied to any concrete and actual structure of civilization had first to be demonstrated with every weapon in a great master's hand, as a prior condition of discerning and working out a new and better order of society to replace the old. That over against the *civitas terrena*, which, however imposing and sacrosanct, had no permanent and abiding worth, there was a higher and abiding fellowship, which nothing in the sphere of temporal events could sever—the one abiding reality, man's true and lasting home, a home which he could find and dwell in under earthly conditions but only fully occupy in the world to come—this truth had first to be asserted with apocalyptic emphasis, before it could be seen that this higher order of eternal values was itself the regulative factor of temporal society, in the light and according to the principles of which all human things were to be ordered: and it was the task of the millennium which followed Augustine's death to embody the truth which he had released from its trappings in the social structure of a whole age.

IV

CHRISTENDOM IN FACT AND IDEA

THE signal achievement of St. Augustine was, as we have seen, the dissolution of the closed-imperium conception of the State and of human society, for which classical civilization had stood, that conception in accordance with which "the interests with which religion is concerned, and the interests with which politics are concerned, are as yet, to all intents and purposes, coincident and coextensive."¹ In his greatest and longest work Augustine had sought to vindicate at the bar of history the dual character, earthly and heavenly, of man's citizenship, and, for those possessing the freedom of the City of God, the insignificance of the former in comparison with the latter in its bearing on human destiny. He had set on unassailable foundations the reality and supremacy of a higher realm, a *civitas Dei*, with love as its law and eternal peace as its goal, a realm which stood over against and in sharp contrast with the secular world, the *civitas impiorum*, represented for him, in spite of his spontaneous recognition of its relative value and the splendour of its achievements, in the Roman Imperial order. It is indeed noticeable that Augustine sees in the Empire, as a vast politico-social structure, a demon-governed heathen power over against the Christian community, in spite of the fact that for a whole century, but for the brief interlude of the Julian reaction, that Empire had increasingly become Christian from the official standpoint, and Christianity had increasingly been accepted and promoted as its official religion.

¹ Kidd, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

In reference to this great field, then, as in the personal sphere, his outlook was sharply dualistic. He had effectually broken up that unity of life, on the earthly and temporal level, for which *Romanitas* stood, and had set the secular and sacred realms in clear antithesis. Nor can there be any doubt that this vindication in unmistakable terms of the existence and supreme claims of a spiritual order, given of God and from above, yet seeking and finding appropriate expression in the concrete terms of human history, was a necessary preliminary to the establishment of a new civilization, the whole basis of which should be the acknowledgement of the supremacy of eternal values over temporal throughout human life. Thus, standing on the boundary line between the old world and the new, Augustine had provided the terms of reference for the medieval problem, but had not attempted a solution of what was to prove in every realm, both of practical life as also of thought, the vital question of the succeeding millennium, that of the synthesis of the spiritual and the temporal, the sacred and the secular, within a single unified Christian society.

What characterized these centuries, and increasingly as the confused disorder of the dark ages merged into the static equilibrium of the medieval era, was the common assumption, accepted no less by the civil authority than by the ecclesiastical, not merely of the fact, but of the unquestioned primacy, of man's spiritual nature and immortal destiny, as that to the service and furtherance of which every human capacity, every grade of society and every institution were to be consciously directed. Here was an assumption which carried with it the denial and dissolution of the secular, as a self-existent independent sphere, as an end in itself, and the acknowledgement of the sole supremacy, almost the sole existence, of the sacred. It meant too, in effect, as Troeltsch says, "an

interpenetration of Church and State, of the spiritual and the temporal, of the ascetic and socio-political aspects of life, which gave the Church of the Middle Ages a quite different character from that of the early Church.”¹ For now the tension between secular and sacred had been resolved by the inclusion in principle of the whole of life, in all its departments, within the sacred realm. No longer did Church and society stand over against each other: for Church and society were one. And if it was the Church which defined the limits and determined the character of society, then there could be no question where the ultimate seat of authority lay. If all life stood under the sign of Christ and fell accordingly within the sphere of the controlling guidance and direction of the Church, as invested with the authority of Christ on the earthly plane, then it was the Church which must of right have the controlling voice in the ordering of all human affairs, not only on the specifically religious plane, but in the political and economic spheres also.

This ecclesiastical omnicompetence did not necessarily mean that there was no place left in the ordering of human society for the civil ruler. It did, however, mean the setting of the civil ruler on a definitely lower level of authority and dignity than that on which the hierarchy of the Church stood. It did carry with it the acknowledgment that the Empire and the Emperor were but subservient instruments in the divine ordering of the world, providing a basis of temporal peace and wellbeing, on which the spiritual superstructure could be reared. And if, as might well be, there was controversy as to whether this or that department fell under the directly controlling hand of Pope or Emperor, as included within the religious or the temporal sphere, it was for the Church to decide what did or did not fall within the scope of

¹ *Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, vol. i, 223.

religion: and as it could well be claimed that nothing fell without it, it was the Church as centred in the Papacy which could thus assert its claim to a final voice in every department of life, even if it left to the Empire a relative and instrumental authority in matters for which it was the divinely appointed agent.

Thus, then, the whole trend both of fact and of theory told increasingly in favour of the Papacy as against the Empire as the culminating-point in the structure of Christendom. "That the spiritual exceeds any earthly power in dignity and nobility we ought the more openly to confess the more spiritual things excel temporal ones." "Both swords, the spiritual and the material, therefore, are in the power of the Church; the one indeed to be wielded for the Church, the other by the Church; the one by the hand of the priest; the other by the hand of kings and knights, but at the will and sufferance of the priest." So ran the Bull *Unam Sanctam* promulgated by Boniface VIII in 1302, which, however far provoked by the political situation of the time, was no more than the logical outcome of what, at least since the eleventh century, had been the governing conception of society. For the regulative idea which dominated the mind of the Middle Ages was that of a Christendom, a unified and universal Christian society embodied in, and indeed coterminous with, a unified and universal Church. Nor, so long as society was rooted and grounded in that idea, could there be any question with whom the right of supreme jurisdiction lay; and in so far as for the needs of such a society the sword of temporal restraint and compulsion had to be used, and provision for civil government made, that authority and that government were secondary and derivative, delegated by the sacred authority, built up and cast down, planted and rooted up at the discretion of that authority, and having for its

subordinate purpose the provision of a temporal basis for the pursuit of man's spiritual end and welfare.

For here, let it be emphasized again, in the common recognition of a nature and of a need which could not find satisfaction on the temporal and earthly level alone, of a destiny only to be fulfilled through membership in a heavenly commonwealth, and ultimately through a life beyond this life, there lay the acknowledged goal of all human endeavour, and accordingly the regulative norm for all earthly institutions and for society as a whole. "The medieval period," says Dr. Bussell in his Bampton Lectures of 1905 on "Christian Theology and Social Progress,"¹ "derives all its splendour of achieving the ideal, all its undaunted courage in the face of disappointment, all its consideration for the weaker, its artistic culture (which embellished this life, just because it pointed beyond it), its moral restraint on irresponsible power, from an abiding sense of the nearness, of the reality of spiritual things . . . the notion of heaven, as the ultimate recompense or the true form of human life, penetrated into every relation." The last words deserve emphasis. For what is most significant in the medieval ideal is that in spite of its otherworldliness, and its acknowledgment of the primacy of eternal values as against those of the temporal order, it yet sought fulfilment rather in world acceptance than in world renunciation. As its main aim and direction, it looked not to a mystical flight from the world but to the conquest of the world for Christ, the stamping of all life from the centre to the circumference with the mark of the sacred.

It might well have been otherwise. It might have been consistently claimed that the supreme religious values of life were only secure in so far as they were embodied and cultivated in social forms which involved a withdrawal from the

¹ P. 67.

world and its condemnation as a realm self-excluded by its very nature from the impact of the forces of redemption. But the men of the Middle Ages had not so learned Christ. To them such withdrawal and such abandonment would have spelled a denial of the central dogma of their faith, or at least a refusal to accept its implications for human life. It was not, of course, that the ascetic ideal of separation from the secular realm was lost sight of or ceased to be pursued, both for its own rewards, and as a protest and safeguard against a too compromising acceptance of the standards and pursuits of the world on the part of the Church. The classic expression of that ideal was the monastery and the monastic movement, which throughout the centuries of the medieval period remained the accepted embodiment within the unity of the Catholic Church of the ascetic attitude, guarding and preserving the sacred as a realm apart uncontaminated by the assoilage of the world.

Yet even the monastery was far from being based wholly on the ideal of world denial or of protest. For particularly in the earlier centuries of the medieval era it was the monastery which, so far from jettisoning, guarded the traditions of classical culture endangered, if not lost, in the turbulent world without, and in its varied organized activities, economic and other, represented a kind of microcosm of Christendom as a whole. Indeed, the great abbeys of the Carolingian period were "not only the intellectual and religious leaders of Europe, but also the chief centres of material culture and of artistic and industrial activity."¹ It was rather the sects formed in separation not only from the world, but from the organized hierarchical Church, in which the most logical and unqualified expression of the ascetic attitude was found: and confessedly they stood aside from the main stream of

¹ Dawson, *The Making of Europe*, pp. 231 f.

Christian society, and were repudiated, and indeed repressed, as fruitless branches severed from the parent tree. For the prevailing attitude characteristic of the Church, in distinction from the sects, was that of world acceptance, to this extent at least, that the very *raison d'être* of the Church, indeed the very meaning and purpose of the Incarnation of which the sacerdotal and sacramental Church was the extension, was regarded as that of proclaiming and vindicating the universal lordship of Christ, and of subduing to His sway the world of persons and of things, all human relationships, however remote and profane they might appear to be.

That the world in the last resort belonged not to the devil but to God, that the divine sovereignty extended to the whole realm of things, this was the central positive conviction of the medieval Church. That all earthly affairs must be ordered on the basis of the acknowledgment of the kingship of Christ, and brought at their various levels under His dominion, here, whatever the method followed of making good this conception of right order in concrete fact, was the axiom universally accepted and acted upon. There was then no room, in the thought and practice of the age, for a secular realm, political, economic or other, which could be organized and directed in accordance with its own principles, motives and methods, and without reference to any higher sacred sanction and authority. The long-drawn contest between Emperor and Pope was not a conflict for supremacy as between the sacred and the secular realms. Still less was it a conflict between Church and State. Conflict there was, exacerbated on either side by personal pride and ambition, but not a conflict on ultimate principles as to the constitution of society. Rather was it always kept within the limits of a major common assumption, that of a single *societas perfecta*, based throughout on the recognition of the law of Christ as

that under which all stood: and the only issue was "as to the relative dignity and position of its two functions, sacerdotium and regnum, and their respective officers."¹

This is the issue which lent critical importance to the Investiture Conflict of the eleventh century, and constituted it a crucial turning-point in medieval history. That conflict, as "a struggle for right order in the world,"² was not one as to the character and source of right order. It was based throughout on the understanding, accepted by either party to the contest, that right order in the world meant a civilization governed at all levels by the principles of Christ. Thus it was a contest not as to ends but as to means, as to the authority with whom primarily rested the responsibility for implementing and establishing right order as so interpreted. The two swords theory of parallel authorities, as stated by Gelasius at the end of the fifth century, proved wholly inadequate to meet the demands of a later age. For by common acknowledgment there were no longer two civitates, secular and sacred, State and Church, alongside and exclusive of each other, each governed by its own appropriate law and its own appropriate authority. There was one society only, the society of Christendom, the community whose ultimate law was the revealed will of God: and the task whether of Pope or King, however far fulfilled at different levels, was in the last resort the same, the task of interpreting and enforcing the implications of that revelation through all the breadth and length of human life.

Indeed, in accordance with the nature of his commission as so conceived the Prince himself was regarded, and regarded himself, as invested with a sacred character. His consecration and anointing bestowed upon him a quasi-

¹ Hobhouse, *The Church and the World in Idea and History*, p. 196.

² Tellenbach, *Church, State and Christian Society*, p. 1.

sacerdotal dignity. He was no mere layman, occupying the highest rank of the laity. His office set him apart from the priestly hierarchy on the one hand, but also from the rank and file of the laity on the other. His authority was derived directly from God, not delegated through the priesthood. Here in a theocratic kingship, exercised by divine appointment, there was constituted, at least for Charlemagne and his successors, the corner stone of the structure of right order in the world. This conception of kingly responsibility did not of course mean that the priest, the Bishop, and above all the Pope, were not recognized and respected as charged with a function all their own, that of being the repositories and transmitters of sacramental grace, to whom indeed the Prince was himself beholden for the means of eternal salvation. Nor did it mean the absence of strong protests against kingly usurpation of priestly "Liberties,"¹ where such occurred. It did mean that the King or Emperor had an undisputed voice in ecclesiastical appointments and the acknowledged right to invest the prelate with the insignia of his office. It meant, too, that the King was not only supreme in the realm of civil government but exercised by theocratic authority a far-reaching control over the affairs of the Church.

Yet throughout there was latent, if seldom expressed, a rival conception of authority, and of its supreme seat and centre, which, as conditions grew ripe for it, as it was seized upon and given expression to by representative men of thought and action, was bound to involve a repudiation of theocratic kingship, as hitherto claimed and exercised. It found most forcible expression in the *a fortiori* contention of Hildebrand, both before and after he ascended the Papal throne. The priest, and more particularly the Priest of

¹ Cf., Tellenbach, *op. cit.*, pp. 16 f.

priests, the Pope, stood in a relation to God and to Christ shared by none other, not even the King. If Christ was the revelation of God, then Christ Himself was incarnate in the Church, and more particularly in the priestly hierarchy, through which alone the sacramental grace necessary to salvation could be transmitted. Confessedly the spiritual realm stood supreme in human valuation and possession. Confessedly too the priest was the earthly master and minister of this realm, holding in his hands its keys, determining who should stand within it and who be excluded from it, to whom its benefits should be given and from whom they should be withheld, exercising in that all-important sphere an acknowledged jurisdiction. But if this higher realm fell wholly under priestly control, *much more* must the realm of mundane things do so, the lower temporal world of politics, law and trade: a world which itself, even if on a lower level than the more specifically spiritual sphere, was potentially included within the realm of the sacred, the realm for which, therefore, the Church and its hierarchy were the supreme legislative authority.

Thus the conclusion was pushed remorselessly home. For if there were not two orders, but one order only of society, and that order the Christian, there could not in the last resort be two heads but only one, and that the priestly. The King was thus deprived of his semi-sacerdotal character and was relegated to the ranks of the laity. In the ordering of human affairs he still, indeed, had his essential part to play, but not in independence of the Church and priesthood, the secular minister of which he was. Nay more, if the King failed in his prescribed duty, or pursued a policy thought inimical to the interests of the Church and religion as conceived by the hierarchy, he could be deposed from his throne and his subjects released from their obedience. It was this

new and gigantic claim suddenly sprung on the Church and the world by Gregory VII which brought the Middle Ages to a head, provided the crucial factor in the direction taken by events, and gave to the later centuries of the medieval period their special character and tension. For now in the hierarchy of being and life, as conceived by the medieval mind, Pope and Emperor no longer stood side by side, with separate spheres of jurisdiction and control. Rather, next to God and to Christ stood the Pope, the earthly repository of divine authority and law, under whose sway stood the whole unified realm of Christendom, the King occupying an office and fulfilling a task which constituted him not as head over, but as a dutiful son and servant of, the Church.

The Christendom, then, which came to fruition in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was an "ecclesiastically controlled civilization,"¹ governed by the overmastering passion for unity. Its informing ideal, in cherishing which it served itself heir of the Roman Empire, was that of a unified society embracing in its ordered life all men, of whatever rank or station, and every form of human enterprise and activity, including even the enterprise of war. Moreover it was the embodiment of the claim, axiomatic in its universal recognition, of the supremacy of spiritual over temporal values. Inevitably, therefore, it found its main constituting bond not in the Empire but in the Church. The basis of fellowship within it was not a common franchise and citizenship within a political order, but common membership of the Church catholic. With equal inevitability, therefore, it found its visible focus in the Papacy. Its root assumption was that of the competence of the Catholic faith, as interpreted and applied by the teaching ruling Church, to provide a Christian solution for all human problems, and to bring under the

¹ Troeltsch, op. cit., vol. i, p. 234.

acknowledged dominion of Christ all human thought and activity. Its supreme aim was thus to exercise in practice the control of religion, as concentrated in the hierarchy of the Church, over the whole range of human life and further to justify and rationalize that control by a reasoned world view providing the counterpart in the realm of thought and theory to the grand attempt and achievement, of which the visible result and outcome was the actual structure of society.

Such a reasoned world view was demanded for the purpose "of bringing the whole of life into organic relation with religious thought,"¹ and of providing "a uniform Christian ethic,"² as the theoretical basis of "an ecclesiastically controlled *res publica Christiana*."³ It implied therefore the explicit repudiation of any clean-cut breach between the secular and the sacred levels of life, such as would leave whole areas and departments outside the realm with which religion was concerned, and unrelated to the divine will and purpose. It recognized, in Von Hügel's words, that "God's action moves on two levels, the natural level and the supernatural."⁴ The two realms of secular and sacred stood in organic relation with each other, and both at different removes were subject to God and the divine Law. There was no absolute antithesis between the wide fields of human activity included within the natural order, and the higher realm of supernature within which the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Spirit held sway. The assumption was indeed unquestioned of the supremacy of eternal over temporal values, and of the God-given destiny of man, whatever his place in the social structure, as being the attainment of eternal life and the beatific vision by means of the grace bestowed through

¹ Troeltsch, op. cit., vol. i, p. 259.

² *Ib.*, p. 258.

³ *Ib.*, p. 258.

⁴ *Essays and Addresses*, 2nd series, p. 219.

priestly and sacramental channels. And there must always be those whose explicit vocation it was to order their lives directly by this supernatural standard, and in separation from the world to practise the discipline of which sanctity was the goal.

There were, however, it was frankly recognized, whole tracts of life belonging to that natural order within which on one side of his complex being man was rooted, and concerned with his this-worldly needs and interests, which themselves, even if on a lower level, fell within that unified and comprehensive order constituted by the Church as the Christian society in the wider sense. For, however much of the world they might be, these lower levels of life, concerned with man's economic and other needs, and the institutions in which they took organized shape, themselves were included within God's creative purpose and were subject to the divine ordering and governance. They constituted the wide field within which the Law Natural held good, the law which, stamped on the universe as a whole, was discoverable by human reason, and which, itself given of God, even if unacknowledged as such, was testified to by the conscience of man as the sacred and ultimately authoritative standard of his relations with his fellow men in all the affairs of life, and obedience to which constituted the preparatory stage of the higher levels of spiritual attainment. Thus conceived the "chain of being" was unbroken throughout: or to vary the metaphor, the one building which constituted the home of man rose tier by tier from lowest to highest. "The Kingdom of nature becomes the portal of the kingdom of grace,"¹ and the Church was thus enabled to "make room for the natural basis and for the ethical values of this world . . . by allowing a relative value to these things, and only then leading up

¹ Troeltsch, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 283.

from these relative values to those which are absolute."¹

The presupposition, then, of the medieval synthesis, as systematized by St. Thomas Aquinas, was the recognition of "an ascending development from the values of the life of this world to those of the transcendent realm."² It stood for the principle of continuity and transition as between the order of nature and that of grace. For it the former no less than the latter stood under law to God, and was the sphere within which the divine will could be discerned and the divine purpose fulfilled. Prior to and presupposed by the order of redemption was the order of creation, itself emanating from God, subject to the governance of God, the destined realm of God. It is true, as was fully recognized, that the fulfilment of that destiny had been frustrated by sin, which had wrested the natural order from its course, and brought it into a bondage from which it could only be delivered as it was directly subjected to the higher order of redemptive grace. Hence, whatever relative autonomy was rightly accorded to it, the world of secular pursuits and activities, including the State, could not stand alone as a self-contained and self-complete framework of life. Indeed, it could only retain, or be restored to, its own proper nature, and learn obedience to its own law, in so far as it stood in organic relation to the higher realm of super-nature, and indeed under the direction of the ecclesiastical authority.

Yet the converse was equally true : for if the lower realm, within which the law natural held good, was not complete in itself, so neither was the realm of grace. And the latter only then occupied its rightful place, as the coping-stone of the structure, the final term of that "architectonic classified system of ends"³ which constituted the Thomist world

¹ Troeltsch, op. cit., vol. i, p. 271.

² *Ib.*, p. 277.

³ *Ib.*, p. 273.

picture, in so far as on its side it stood in organic relation with the whole order of nature and of this-worldly activities, and recognized the latter, if on a lower and preparatory level, yet as falling within and not without the divinely constituted order of the *Corpus Christianum*.

If the conception so outlined had its weakness, it lay in the very completeness of the synthesis which it sought to effect. In their passion for an all-embracing unity, the medieval philosophers may well have been led to minimize aspects of reality which failed to find a place in the total scheme of things as they set it forth. Certainly it rested on an optimistic view of nature and of man, and the refusal to regard it or him as wholly corrupted by sin. It was, indeed, on its supposed failure to take seriously enough the fact and effects of sin that the Reformers seized, in their rejection of the medieval world view and their denial of any continuity and transition as between the order of nature and that of grace. Yet its greatness and fruitfulness cannot be denied. It succeeded in finding room within the one divinely constituted order for the interrelated realms of secular and sacred, in bringing them into vital and organic relation with each other, and more particularly in according to the secular sphere a religious potentiality which delivered it from frustration and revealed its inherent significance and value. It provided a theological background of a synthesis between the two realms, the way to which must be found in our day, as much as in the past, as the condition of a Christian order of society.

Such in idea and achievement was medieval Christendom. As so projected and brought to fruition it represented the assertion of Western standards as against Byzantine, and within the West of the Latin craving for unity of social structure as against the separatist tendencies characteristic of Frankish and Germanic tribalism. In the Byzantine East

the almost unbroken continuity of the Roman Imperial line symbolised and expressed the fact that the State and the civil authority, and not the Church and its hierarchy, was the predominant factor in the ordering of society. This change of emphasis did not, however, carry with it any surrender of the claim to integrate religion and its sanctions into the whole social structure. Indeed, in some respects, it carried this integration even further than was the case with Western Christendom. Byzantine civilization represented the merging of the two realms in one, and, as has been said, was embodied in a "unitary Church State of which the secular and religious aspects were almost indistinguishable."¹ But in this highly bureaucratized society the outstanding figure was throughout not the patriarch but the Emperor: and the organised hierarchically governed Church, while an essential element in the total structure of society, was no more than a junior partner in the alliance, the main pillar of a Caesaro-papism, which used it, in line with the policy of Constantine and Theodosius, as the spiritual buttress of the classical Romano-Hellenic tradition, of which, however far and increasingly modified by oriental influences, the Byzantine Emperor was the hereditary guardian and trustee.

Thus the Church as such in the East never had the whole field to itself, as the one supreme omnicompetent authority, to the extent which circumstances rendered possible, and perhaps inevitable, in the West. There, too, the Roman Imperial tradition of a single all-embracing order of society lived on, but in the absence of its representation in the effective and continuous assertion of Imperial authority, it found embodiment in the Church and the Papacy rather than in the Empire and the Emperor. It was not indeed that the Church could dispense with the civil authority. In the interests of

¹ Dawson, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

order, it needed its own counterpart in the political sphere: and it found this counterpart by turning from Constantinople and the East to the independent emerging monarchies of the West.

Hence the supreme significance in its bearing on the future of Western civilization of the coronation of Charles the Great by the Pope on Christmas Eve, 800. Its significance lay in the dual fact that on the one hand it represented the acknowledgment by the Papacy of the reconstitution of the Empire in the Western Frankish monarchy of Charles and his successors, and on the other the recognition by Charles himself of the Papacy as a necessary corner stone in the fabric which he had set himself to build. Henceforth the Papacy looked to the Emperors of the West, and not of the East, for providing the political order within which the Church could peaceably discharge its spiritual task. And equally Charles looked to the Church centred in Rome, and the guardian of the Roman tradition, for the spiritual sanction and leadership which he needed in the great task of fashioning and unifying the culture and civilization of western Europe. It was, indeed, an unequal alliance in which in the Carolingian age the predominant partner was undoubtedly the Emperor and not the Pope. It was at this stage the Emperor, who held in his own hands the swords of spiritual and temporal authority, saw himself and acted as *Episcopus forensis*, head and guardian of Church as well as State. It was indeed only with the aid of great Churchmen occupying places of high authority in the State that Charles could essay his task: yet throughout he held the reins of power in his own hands. By conquest and mass conversion, by detailed and far-reaching legislation, and by the encouragement of learning and education he sought to consolidate his vast dominions on a Christian basis; and to him was primarily due the concep-

tion of Christendom as a "single homogeneous civilization," Christian in government and in every sphere of its secular activities. And he bequeathed a pattern of society which never faded from men's eyes.

But with his death the Empire was divided: and there followed a new dark age of havoc and destruction by the Northern invaders only ended by the acceptance on the part of the invading Norsemen themselves of the standards of Roman and Christian culture. The supreme achievement of the later medieval age was the incorporation of northern and Germanic with Latin elements in a single order of society. But meanwhile the tables had been turned in the relative supremacy of Emperor and Pope: and the eleventh century, as we have seen, witnessed the growing recognition of the latter rather than the former as the visible focus and centre of Christendom, and the claim of the Pope to gather into his own hands the strands of both temporal and spiritual authority.

It must indeed be acknowledged that the claim was one which, however far it could find justification as a logical deduction from premises accepted by society as a whole, yet in the method of its assertion tended inevitably to over-reach itself. It carried with it an insistence on the supremacy of the sacred along compulsive arbitrary lines which could only provoke a violent recoil from the secular side. In the very process of vindicating an all-embracing supremacy in the temporal, no less than the spiritual, realm the Church went far towards surrendering that quality of detachment from the world on which the due exercise and recognition of its authority depended. "The Papal system,"¹ wrote Dr. Hobhouse in his Bampton Lectures on the Church and the World, "tried to set up a theocracy above the kingdoms of

¹ Hobhouse, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

this world, to absorb the world and the State into the Church; and in doing so was forced to use worldly weapons and immoral means." The Church was drawn into the political arena, and became involved in political intrigue, tortuous diplomacy and armed strife: and in so far as this was so, Dr. Hobhouse is justified in his assertion that "the system of the medieval Papacy tended to secularize the Church more than it spiritualized the world."¹

Nor can there be any doubt that the assertion of Papal dominance in the political field prepared the ground for the secular state of the future. Resentment at its undue exercise in a sphere with its own rights and its own claim to autonomy found an outlet not only in the repudiation on the part of politically conscious communities of Papal authority, but in a readiness to reject any governing standards of political conduct save those dictated by considerations of interest and utility.

In the full fruition of its later period, then, medieval Christendom was based on a conception of world order which in the onward march of history could have only a temporary validity. Moreover, there were definite limits, both temporal and territorial, within which the conditions existed for the realization of the medieval ideal. In its fullest expression that ideal was embodied in the civilization which prevailed over the area and the period within which the Papacy maintained its prestige as the visible focus of society. The limits thus set are accordingly those of Western Europe from the eleventh until the sixteenth century. Halfway through the former occurred the final rupture which severed the western and eastern halves of the Christian world, and deprived each half of the contribution which the other could make to the fullness of a Christian civilization: and early in the latter

¹ Hobhouse, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

came the equally decisive rupture of the Western Church, thus bringing to a head the assertion of forces of German separatism, the reconciliation of which with the Roman Imperial tradition of unity had alone made Western Christendom possible, but which, however far driven underground, constituted throughout a latent threat to the static order of medieval society centralized in Rome and the Papacy.

Yet, with all due allowance for these qualifications, it can be ungrudgingly conceded that medieval Christendom was a magnificent achievement, representing as it did the triumphant embodiment in social terms of a ruling moral idea. The governing conception underlying it was, as we have seen, that of a whole order of society, all its members and all its departments, from highest to lowest, cohering in the acknowledgment of a common faith and in obedience to the law of Christ, as interpreted and applied by the authoritative Church. And not least, by common consent, this law held good in the economic realm, and as finding expression in the just price and the prohibition of usury exercised a restraining hand on the assertion of those economic appetites, that more-having spirit which was in time to break loose, clothe itself in the borrowed plumes of religion, and dominate the philosophy and practice of a whole epoch.

All that, however, lay in the future: and meanwhile not only were considerations of commercial profit by common consent relegated to a secondary place in the scale of values. The actual form taken by medieval society facilitated the acceptance of the validity of ethical standards in this great sphere. The day of a money economy, of a cash nexus between man and man, and of a mutually competitive delimitation of classes in the economic sphere was not yet. Society was indeed organized on an architectonic pattern,

storey by storey from lowest to highest; yet within the structure of society as a whole, and the functional corporative forms in which it took shape, there was room for each to find his recognized, if rigidly determined, place. There was no class of the unwanted, with no rights and no responsibilities. In and for himself, and within the rank or group to which he belonged, the individual was accorded his proper due of recognition and respect. The state of life in which each was born and to which each was called was, indeed, that in which each must abide content. Yet, at whatever level in the "chain of being," that state of life fell within the organic whole of human society, and he who fulfilled his life's work within it had his rights as well as his duties, and a recognized claim to security, as a member of the body politic and ecclesiastical. Resting thus on a personalist basis, as against the impersonal mechanized order of a later age, the very nature of the social fabric provided "a comparatively favourable soil for the realization of the ethical ideals of Christendom as they had been formulated under the guidance of that Church."¹

And within limits, which could only be maintained for a time, this was equally true in the political sphere. The units of civil government were such, in themselves and in relation to one another, as to conform to the ruling idea of a united Christendom. The day of States, "unitary, omnipotent and irresistible,"² in the modern sense was not yet. The nation as a territorial unit organized on a basis of self-determination had not yet emerged. The sphere of civil authority had little, if any, relation to nationality and to national frontiers. Here, too, society was organized not on a territorial but on a personalist basis, the basis of principalities, each with its determined rights, within the feudal structure. The emanci-

¹ Troeltsch, op. cit., vol. i, p. 252. ² Figgis, *From Gerson to Grotius*, p. 13.

pation of politics from ecclesiastical control, and its assertion of independence, was still to come, and to be carried to a point all the more extreme because of the undue rigour with which that control had been claimed and asserted. And least of all could the Empire stand out as an all-embracing area of unified civil government separate from and independent of the Church, or offer effective resistance to the claim of the ecclesiastical authority to dominance. For equally with the Church, the Empire was itself based on the common assumption of the supremacy of the spiritual over the temporal, and therefore by implication of the ecclesiastical over the civil authority.

Indeed, in the heyday of Papal supremacy, "the State or rather the civil authority . . . was merely the police department of the Church,"¹ and in spite of constantly renewed armed contest between Emperor and Pope, in spite too of literary attempts to vindicate the independence and, indeed, the sovereign authority of the Emperor, of which the *de Monarchia* was only the most distinguished, the political realm remained and was bound to remain in tutelage to the plenitudo potestatis of the Papacy, so long as human society was coterminous and identical with the Church, so long as Baptism was synonymous with political enfranchizement, and so long as the Church and its hierarchy were the acknowledged fount of all law, all government, and all jurisdiction. Such indeed, under the conditions of the age, was the inevitable expression in political terms of a Christian order of society governed on the principle of the common acknowledgment of a revealed law divine. It is true that, as we have already pointed out, the subservience of the political realm to that of the ecclesiastical, and the denial to the former of such independence as it could rightly claim, paved the way for the

¹ Figgis, op. cit., p. 4.

secular non-moral nation State of the future: and the very triumph of the Papacy over the Empire, and the reduction of the latter to political impotence, recoiled with fatal effect on the Papacy itself, and on that for which the Papacy stood, when forces political and religious united to dispute and repudiate its authority. But in the age with which we are concerned, the rise of the self-sufficient centralized nation State lay yet in the future: it was indeed to be the rock on which the medieval idea and medieval society were to break; and meanwhile the absence of any effective resistance from the political side to an omnicompetent Church was itself a governing factor in, and condition of, a unified Christian society, culminating not in the temporal but in the spiritual authority.

Thus in both the political and the economic spheres there was a ready-made adaptability to the ruling medieval idea of civilization dominated and permeated throughout by the revealed law of Christ. Neither in the one field nor the other had there yet emerged an insistence on an autonomy which ruled out as inapplicable any sanctions save those acknowledged by the interest concerned in the light of its own self-constituted nature and end. "There were no independent secular values of civilization which might have felt and claimed a divine right to exist apart from the Church and her ideals. The only sovereignty that existed was that of the Church; there was no sovereignty of the State, nor of economic production, nor of science or art."¹ Such resistance as was made to absorption within the sacred domain as governed by the Church came not from any secular sphere of activity, but from a rival interpretation of the sacred itself and its relation to the secular. It took shape in the sects on the basis of the exclusion, so far as was practicable, of all spheres of

¹ Troeltsch, op. cit., vol. i, p. 252.

worldly interest and activity as inherently alien from the Kingdom of God. And while the sects claimed that their interpretation of life was that most in keeping with the standard of the Gospel, and indeed could rightly claim the sanction of a marked strain in the teaching of the Gospel, yet the uncompromisingly world-denying way of life which their members professed and practised, as it took shape in communities separated from the body of the Church, could only lead to a blind alley and to extremes of social habit and custom which went far to discredit them.

Apart, however, from these isolated foci of protest and resistance there was not only the absence of any claim to a sovereign autonomy independent of the sovereign Church. There was a positive readiness to acknowledge the competence of the Church to legislate for every form of organized activity, and through its legislation to subsume the whole of life into the sphere of the sacred. It is only too true that there were weaknesses, not so much in the ruling conception for which the medieval Church stood, as in the methods by which under the circumstances of the time it found concrete expression, weaknesses which left the structure unable to adapt itself to, and to come to terms with, the new forces of self-assertion in the political and other spheres which were to arise. Yet the fact that the medieval structure of Christendom was, in important respects, the creature of its age, and found only a temporary realization, is not to condemn it, and still less the ruling conception by which it was governed. Fundamentally that conception was rooted in a common faith, the faith of the Incarnation as the taking of manhood and of human nature into God, and in a resolve not to shrink from the full implications of that faith in the concrete terms of human life. The overriding aim was that of bringing all orders and levels of life, all human capacities, all spheres of

human activity, under the sign of Christ, or, to use the language of the New Testament, "to sum up all things in Christ."¹

It was, indeed, inevitable that the very grandeur of the attempt to bring all things secular within the sacred sphere carried with it its own characteristic dangers, dangers of a too-ready compromise with and acceptance of given secular standards. And to counteract this danger there was abundant scope for the ascetic ideal, not, however, as an alternative and parallel expression of the Gospel, but as a constantly needed expression of protest against a too-easy and far-reaching accommodation of sacred standards to secular, an undue readiness to compromise with the world in order to bring the world within the sacred realm; a means, therefore, of redressing the balance by an eschatological insistence on the other-worldly character of the Kingdom of Christ and by a disciplined life ordered and governed in accordance with other-worldly standards.

We would, however, claim that pressing as were the perils to which the great Church was exposed, and, indeed, succumbed, in the fulfilment of its supreme aim of summing up all things in Christ, that aim was justified as the central expression of the Church's faith in its Lord: and while Dr. Hobhouse, in the Lectures already referred to, was emphatically right in calling attention, on the evidence of fact, to the manifest perils of accommodation to worldly standards on the part of the Church, we cannot accept his main plea that the Church should, as far as possible, maintain and organize itself in isolation from the field of secular activities, and not rather seek to enter it, to interpenetrate it with the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ, and to vindicate the power of the Christian faith to provide the

¹ Eph. i, 10.

unifying spiritual cement of the whole structure of society.

We would fully allow that a price had to be paid for the very greatness of the conception which underlay the medieval endeavour and achievement, indeed, for the very all-embracingness of the achievement itself. It was hardly possible to give effect to so sovereign a claim without inviting the inevitable recoil. The very completeness of the synthesis between the sacred and the secular aimed at and effected by the men of the Middle Ages was the measure of the impermanence and fragility of the mighty fabric which they built. It was rendered possible by finding a place for the values of the world, at different levels, within the integrating whole of a Christian civilization. It could not, indeed it made no attempt to, transform society from within, still less to press for revolutionary changes in the social order designed to bring it into closer conformity with the spirit of Christ. It provided "an all-embracing sociological system . . . but not a programme of social reform"¹: indeed, to the medieval Church such a programme "seemed superfluous."¹ The very idea of progress was foreign to it. It rested on a "conservative and traditionalist," an essentially static, conception of life. Society was a single vast structure, every storey in which from lowest to highest had its divinely ordered and determined place. The lower levels of human activity, the pursuits of the world, the whole economic order, were accepted as they were, as the natural God-given substratum on which the higher spiritual ranges of life could be built. The whole fabric was riveted into a unity by the cohesive force not so much of an informing spirit as by law and custom: and it issued in another closed imperium, another one-level civilization, only now on the sacred rather than the secular level. For a time it held, but only for a time. The

¹ Troeltsch, *op. cit.* vol. i, p. 303.

natural vitalities of human life, the forces which sought scope and expression, could not find what they sought within the confines of an ecclesiastically governed social order. The old bottles were too rigid to contain the new wine: and based as it was on an essentially static conception of life, medieval Christendom could not adapt itself or expand to meet the surging demands of a new day.

Nevertheless the conception itself was profoundly Christian, true to the spirit of Christ, true to the supreme mystery of the Incarnation. The aim which it set itself and the achievement which it effected cannot be condemned because they were characteristic of a certain epoch, the reflection in religious terms of temporary conditions which must inevitably give place to other and fresh forces. Rather is the underlying conception and aim to be accepted, that of an order of society, of a whole civilization, Christian in fact as in name, within which all orders and departments of life are touched with the fire from off the altar, and stand in recognized relation to the one supreme all-governing standard of the word and will of Christ. It is the task of those who believe to think out and work out a new synthesis, effecting for our day and century what was effected under the conditions of the time by medieval society, subsuming under the governance of the sacred the whole secular realm.

V

THE RENAISSANCE CHALLENGE

THE modern era, on the threshold of which for the purposes of this lecture we are standing, has been not untruly called, as a whole, "the Renaissance period of history."¹ It is true that in its earlier stage the era was marked not only by the rise and assertion of the forces prevailingly secular, of the Renaissance in the more limited reference of the term, but in the more specifically religious sphere by the great movement of the Reformation. Indeed, to outward appearance, and in respect of visible results radically affecting human life and the structure of human society, it was in the religious realm of the Reformation rather than in the secular realm of the Renaissance that to men living at the time it must have appeared that a turning-point in history had been reached. For generations, indeed for centuries, Christendom as coterminous and identified with a unified and universal Church had provided the common framework of life, and represented the acknowledged supremacy of the values for which religion stood at every level and in every department of society. Here in the realm of religion had lain and still lay the issues crucial and critical for human life and destiny. It was, then, natural, and indeed inevitable, that with the merging of the Middle Ages into the modern era religion did not cease to be the main preoccupation of men and of peoples. It was in the religious realm, and in respect of the assertion and counter-assertion of religious values, that the outstanding events of the time occurred, the

¹ Berdyaev, *The Meaning of History*, p. 150.

rupture of Catholic unity, the establishment not only of Protestant Churches but of Protestant States, the alliances and wars of nations and national monarchies. Yet while less conspicuous in its working, more subtle and obscure in its influence, it was the Renaissance rather than the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation which was to provide the governing spirit of the new age. It was the secular standards of the former rather than the religious standards of the latter which were with greatest effect to penetrate within, and to shape without, the form and structure of modern civilization. It was no longer, as in the millennium now ending, the sacred, it was the secular which was to provide the dominant pre-occupation of men, and indeed, as the centuries passed, to be the hall-mark of the modern age in every field.

It is, then, with the forms which secular and sacred took, the mutual revulsions and mutual adjustments, which marked the relations of the two realms in the age which heralded and followed the break-up of the mighty fabric of medieval unity, that we are now concerned. We have seen that the ruling idea, and the concrete achievement, of the long epoch now ending was that of a single all-embracing Christian society, held together by a common faith and by the steel framework of the institutional Church. Within the great fabric the accepted standard of life was the subjection of every department and activity to the law of Christ, as interpreted and administered by the hierarchy of the Church, supported and aided by the secular arm. In theory at least, no pursuit or interest of man claimed an independent status, or asserted a right to order itself on principles of its own choosing and independently of religious prescription. In the fields of philosophy and scientific enquiry, of artistic expression, of trade and industry, of politics and statecraft, there was the common acknowledgment of religion, and of the

religious institution, as providing not only the ruling motive of each of these spheres of activity, but also the limiting norms in accordance with which they were to be explored. A static unity of institutional framework, answering to an inner realm of mind and spirit, a single architectonic structure of life, each stratum of society, each group organized for common ends, finding and filling its place in an ordered whole, based on commonly accepted religious sanctions, here was the aim, and here to a large extent the achievement, of the medieval epoch, a unity maintainable so long, and only so long, as it could resist the growing challenge of separatist forces, surging movements of thought and action, threatening to disrupt it.

For the medieval structure of life, the synthesis of secular and sacred which it represented, the unified order of Christian society for which it stood, imposing and enduring as it appeared, depended for its maintenance on conditions the continuance of which was increasingly threatened by claims and demands which it proved unable either to resist or to satisfy. Essential to it was its institutional framework, the Church universal, one and all-embracing, centred in the Papacy, the very existence of which was a constant reminder to all men of their unity, of a common allegiance, a common law and a common way of life. But the maintenance of this unified ecclesiastical order depended in its turn on the nature and potency of the forces, in the secular and religious spheres respectively, seeking expression within it, and on the possibility of their mutual adjustment without rupture of the great fabric. A new age was dawning, new interests were demanding freedom of expression, newly-found capacities were claiming a legitimate field of exercise; and if these interests and capacities could not find their satisfaction and their mutual reconciliation within the traditional order, the

disruption of that order was in sight. And experience proved that in face of the potency of new demands for self-expression, demands specifically religious on the one hand and secular on the other, the precarious balance hitherto maintained between the two realms, on the assumption that in every sphere religion and the religious institution had the last say, could no longer stand. The forces of separation proved too strong for those of unity. In the religious realm the growing sense of certain values, concerned with the standing of men with God, felt to be ignored or denied under the sacerdotal order of the Church, broke through in the Reformation and the establishment of independent Christian communities, with their inevitable tendency to concentrate to exaggeration on certain aspects of the common faith at the expense of others: communities too which, in default of the traditional order and authority of the Church, gravitated inevitably, at least so far as Germany was concerned, into the closest possible connection with the secular princes and principalities of the post-medieval age. And on the secular side new fields were opening to view, realms of the mind and realms of nature and of the wider spaces of the earth, awaiting entry and conquest on the part of a humanity conscious of new powers and capacities for new creative achievements: spheres of activity which, failing to find scope within the limits of the existing ecclesiastically governed structure of society, chafing at the limitations imposed by the traditional sanctions of religion, tended to assert themselves on a basis of autonomy, a law to themselves, self-sufficient for their own demands.

Here indeed was to be found the essence of the Renaissance, as a secular movement which was to set its stamp on the whole modern age. To regard it as such is of course to assign to it a much wider than the usual connotation of a

revived interest in classical standards and literature, and more particularly, to quote Lord Acton, of "the renewed study of Greek, and the consequences that ensued from it, during the century and a half between Petrarcha and Erasmus."¹ In this restricted sense, as a humanist movement based on the rediscovery of the treasures of Greek and Latin literature, originating in Italy and exerting there its most potent influence, the Renaissance played a vitally important part in reawakening interest in the classical tradition, and in recalling the circles affected by it to the world of nature and of man which had received inadequate attention in the world view of medieval Christendom. Necessarily, however, it was a limited educated élite, varying in character and extent in different countries, upon which the movement in this sense made its impact. As such it found characteristic expression in literature, art and architecture, it captured the imagination of princes and of distinguished men and women of letters, it penetrated the walls of the Papal palace. As such, too, in the minds of many of its most representative figures it was far from carrying with it a discarding of the values of religion. It has been said of Savonarola that he "sought to resolve the problem of the Renaissance in a Christian sense, not repudiating but subordinating to a religious conception of life all that was being achieved in culture, art and social activity through the new experience of Graeco-Roman classicism."² And what Savonarola stood for in Florentine Italy at the close of the fifteenth century was the aim in the next of More and Colet in this country, of Montaigne in France, and of Erasmus on the European stage as a whole. Their standard was that of a full-orbed Christian humanism, a philosophy of Christ, which welcomed the new light which

¹ *Lectures in Modern History*, p. 71.

² Luigi Sturzo, *Church and State*, p. 178.

the recovered treasures of classical literature threw on the nature, capacity and dignity of man, without, however, discarding the traditional claims of religion to supreme regard.

And yet, as interpreted in the limited sense of a reawakening to the classical tradition in art and literature, the Renaissance can hardly be said to have exerted a decisive effect on the mind and institutions of society as a whole. And it is going too far to claim on its behalf that "it was its work to change in the short space of a hundred years, the mind of Italy and the course of European civilization."¹ Certainly it would not have been sufficient in itself to inaugurate a new epoch of history, or unless alongside it there had been other movements in the secular sphere of immediate and far-reaching effect on the lives of men and the social order. Chief among such movements, and decisive in its bearing on the shape of things to come, was the rise of the delimited national State, as the unit of a centralized government and administration, the consolidation of one area of Europe after another on a basis of sovereign independence, centred in an hereditary monarchy, areas which in the medieval order of civilization had, nominally at least, formed elements in a single body politic, under the suzerainty of the Emperor, and had themselves been organized on a feudal basis, with the Prince in each case as *primus inter pares*, the coping stone of a stratified feudal structure. Experience had, however, increasingly shown that the over-riding claims of security, and of a common law and order, could not be met within each national area on the basis of such divided authority, and necessitated the concentration of political power in the hands of the national monarch. Hence the emergence of the autonomous nation State, its rise and consolidation both fostering, and

¹ Whitfield, *Petrarch and the Renascence*, p. 19.

itself fostered by, the growth of nationalistic sentiment, tending increasingly to become an end in itself, acknowledging no law but that dictated by regard for its own interest, making reasons of State on Machiavellian principles their own justification, and reducing all departmental interests, including that of religion, into little more than instruments of national policy. Set alongside the rupture of Catholic unity, of the ecclesiastical mould within which medieval society had been cast and held, the emergence of nationalism and the nation State was to prove a factor of decisive and fateful importance in establishing both the form and the spirit of the modern age, and the mutual relations of sacred and secular characteristic of that age.

Nor was this all. For alongside the assertion of sovereign independence on the part of the national Prince and the national State was asserted a corresponding claim to autonomy in the economic sphere. In this realm, too, that of industry and commerce, the dawn of the Renaissance age was marked by revolutionary demands and changes. The medieval economic order was based on the town, fed by the country area around it, jealously cherishing its civic independence, with the craft guild as the unit of industrial production, making goods for the home market and for other cities on a basis of barter. And increasingly such restricting localized conditions were resented by the expansive spirit of a new age, with its wider geographical horizons, with the increased opportunities for the accumulation of wealth which it provided, and with the unlimited scope for commercial expansion rendered possible by the change-over from a natural to a money economy. The opportunities thus opened up and seized gave rise to a new class, that of the commercial entrepreneur, cosmopolitan in outlook, chafing at the traditional rules determining the character and limiting the

extent of commercial transactions, and wedded to methods of production and exchange the adoption of which was to affect profoundly the traditional structure of society.

Here, then, were two secular movements, potent expressions of the Renaissance spirit, political on the one hand and economic on the other, each resolved to make calculations of interest the sole law by which it was governed, and to go its own way, regardless of traditional prescription as laid down by the ecclesiastical authority. And the two forces tended to coalesce, each furthering the other's aims and ambitions. The rise of the national State as the centralized unit of administration cut into and cut across the independence of the city and its institutions and encouraged a "territorial economic policy,"¹ and the conversion of trade from an inter-municipal into a national and international activity: and correspondingly it was by the encouragement of commercial enterprise on an enlarged scale, and the accumulation of capital which it rendered possible, that the national monarchies were themselves provided with funds for the prosecution of their policy, and not least for the waging of war.

Such movements, however, as those alluded to, whether in the realm of culture or that of public affairs, derived their primary importance not so much from their expression on the surface of events as from the mind and spirit of the time, that *Zeitgeist*, of which they were symptomatic. And it is essentially as a new world view, a wind of the spirit requickening human life, that the Renaissance can justly be claimed as setting its seal on the modern age. Primarily and fundamentally the Renaissance was a reorientation of the mind of man from the heavens to the earth, a rediscovery by man of the visible order and of himself in relation to it. It was

¹ *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. i, p. 517.

the assertion of his claim, as of right, to explore and enquire into, to exploit and possess for his own ends the world of nature and of natural objects. It represented the claim on man's part to the unhampered exercise of his creative capacities in one sphere of enterprise after another, in detachment from, and independence of, the dead hand of ecclesiastical control. It marked the historic moment at which new windows through which to look at life were thrown open, at which in his growing impatience with what he regarded as the *a priori* principles of doctrinaire scholasticism, and in his "quest for the concrete,"¹ man came into vital contact with himself and with his natural environment. And as such it was a foretaste of that emancipation of the secular from the prescriptive control of the sacred and of its assertion of the claim to autonomy in its own right, which was to gather increasing momentum in the coming centuries.

Yet it would be a mistaking of its character, if, whatever its eventual outcome, the Renaissance were regarded as in essence or intention an anti-religious movement, a deliberate disavowal of man's creaturely relations to God. Indeed it took its rise at a time when religion and its claims held such a priority in human estimation, and in all the assumptions underlying human life, as to rule out such a disavowal. It could not repudiate the Christian tradition of which it was the heir, and however far it might endeavour to recover classical conceptions of nature and life, the one-level self-dependent imperium for which the classical civilization of Greece and Rome had stood, its attempt was bound to break against the hard logic of facts, above all the fact that the one-level order of life had been finally and for ever broken into by the sharp antinomy for which Christianity stood, and that dualism in the nature of man which Christianity had thrown

¹ Luigi Sturzo, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

into hard relief. Hence the uneasy and unresolved tension stamped on the characters and achievements, and particularly the artistic achievements, of the early Renaissance, evidence of man's inability, even if he would, to ignore the fact of Christ, and to rebuild his life on a pre-Christian foundation.

Nor was this tension, and the negative testimony which it bore to the persistence of the Christian tradition, the only evidence of the religious factor in the Renaissance. Its very humanism was, or at least under certain conditions might have proved, a necessary contribution to that fullness of life for which the religion of the Incarnation stands. It represented the resolve to recover certain essential values of humanity, to find scope for the free expression of certain instincts and vitalities of human nature, which felt themselves robbed of their inherent rights under the theocratic regimen of the time. Yet if it was anti-legalistic and anti-clerical in the forms which its assertion took, it was in intention far from being anti-Christian. It stood indeed for the recognition of the secular, in its fullest range, but of the secular as having an integral place in a Christian order of life. The time had come for a redressing of the balance in scales which had for long been overweighted on the side of the transcendent, for a fresh emphasis on the horizontal as against the vertical dimension of life. It has been pointed out that Christianity arose in a world within which the forces of nature, demonic and inimical, exercised an overwhelming predominance in their impact on the spirit of man.¹ Accordingly it followed that if the human spirit was to be emancipated from the bondage to fear thus riveted upon it, and man was to assert his dignity and freedom in his Father's kingdom, emphasis must be laid, even to exaggeration, on

¹ Berdyaev, *op. cit.*, pp. 113 f.

the qualities in man which lifted him above and away from the natural order and directed his gaze on the unseen and eternal realm.

There was, however, loss as well as gain in that emphasis. For it tended to sever man from his roots in nature, and to blind him to his kinship with the created order and with the world of things around him, and to his destined place in and over that world. And the time had now come for the recovery, within a Christian frame of life, of that rightful measure of autonomy in the exercise of his creative capacities in relation to the world of the seen and the temporal, for lack of which man must remain a truncated being, robbed and starved in respect of certain essential elements in his nature. It was this recovery which the Renaissance, in so far as it was a self-conscious resurging of the human spirit, set itself to effect. No longer was the spirit of enquiry, or methods of enquiry into the world of nature, to be repressed or limited by arbitrary authoritarian restrictions. The wide spaces of the earth were there to be explored, both by the traveller and by the enquiring mind: and what grew into the great realm of modern science took its origin in the inexpugnable claim to seek truth for truth's sake, and by methods dictated not by an external authority but by the subject-matter in question. In every field, in art and culture, in industry and trade, in policy national and international, in religion itself, Renaissance man broke from the leading strings of the old all-controlling ecclesiastical order, and set himself to rebuild his own life and the world around him in reliance on capacities newly discovered in his own nature.

Even so, the assertion of the Renaissance spirit in directing the human quest from the heavens to the earth, from the other world to this, did not in itself carry with it a repudiation of the sacred and of the dominant place which religion

held in life. Rather did it constitute a challenge to the Christian forces of the time, however difficult to meet, to provide scope for new demands and movements in the secular realm within a Christian frame of thought and life. It is true, of course, that one condition, and perhaps an essential condition, of the emergence of a Christian social philosophy and a Christian order of society reconcilable with the positive values of the Renaissance, that of the unity and the universality of the Church, no longer held good. The fabric of the Church was rent asunder, and with its rupture society itself, once coterminous and synonymous with the Church, was broken up, and a tendency to what has been called: "departmentalization"¹ set in, marking off what had once been a single organically interrelated community, with common outlook and a common life, into separate spheres of interest, political, commercial, ecclesiastical and other, each bent primarily on asserting its own claim to independence. Still, however, religion remained a dominant interest of life with which every department had to come to terms: and the medieval tradition, the conception of life on all sides as falling, directly or indirectly, under the sign of the sacred lived on long after the structure of medieval unity was broken. The time was still far distant when the sanctions of religion would be regarded as irrelevant to practical affairs, and religion itself be relegated to a confined department of its own, as a separate sphere of interest but without impact or influence on life as a whole.

Meanwhile, in the widening of the scope of life rendered possible by a widening world of pursuit and enquiry the opportunity was presented for a wider and more inclusive humanism, but Christian still, than had been attained within the confined limits of medieval society. In the main the

¹ Temple, *Nature, Man and God*, p. 76.

opportunity was missed, nor was such a more integral humanism achieved either in thought or in practice. The conditions on either side were lacking for bridging the gulf between the claims in the secular sphere of the Renaissance and the affirmations of religion as characteristic of the Churches both of the Reformation and of the Counter-Reformation. So preoccupied were the Churches with the urgent task of formulating or reformulating their own institutional and dogmatic basis and of entrenching themselves within their own lines of defence, that the pressing need for a revised Christian social ethic, adequate to new social forms and forces, was largely neglected, and the field was thus left clear for the full expression of those tendencies to secular self-sufficiency latent in the Renaissance, for the assertion of a self-dependent autonomy in the realm of secular pursuits with increasing disregard for the sanctions of religion.

Such, then, summed up under the term Renaissance, was that surging secular movement of the human spirit, which, at the great divide which history reached at the close of the medieval period, invaded every sphere of activity, political, economic and cultural, claiming in each department, increasingly organized for its own exclusive ends, emancipation, if not from the sanctions of religion as such, yet certainly from the forms which those sanctions had taken as imposed by ecclesiastical authority. There was thus presented a searching and potent challenge to the forces of organized religion, as they took shape and outline in a divided Christendom: and in considering the response which that challenge received it will be well first to recall that decisive part, negative and positive, played in this direction by the leading tendencies, and more particularly by the leading figures, of the continental Reformation.

It has been said of Lutheranism that it is "not a system worked out by Luther; it is the overflow of Luther's individuality."¹ For reasons rooted in the seething depths of his own nature and in the intensity of his religious experience Luther was led to minimize the external and institutional element in religion, and to concentrate almost exclusively on the conscious spiritual experience of the individual soul. For him what mattered supremely was the inward assurance of divine grace pardoning and justifying rather than cleansing and sanctifying. Once that inner kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost possessed, everything in the external world would, he maintained, "instruct and arrange itself." The world was there, not as material to be laid hold of, subdued and transformed by the forces of the spirit, but as the God-given environment within which and over against which this inward and spiritual liberty was to be prized and cherished. The fundamental Christian virtue was that of "happy and docile humility,"² the dependent receptive spirit which claims and effects nothing of its own, but accepts all as from God. The world without, the political and economic order, the whole structure of society, whatever its character and however hardly and unjustly it bore on human life, represented a mysterious dispensation of the hidden Providence for a nature wholly corrupted by sin, the stern school within which the soul was to be disciplined, the coercive authority in regard to which acceptance and obedience was the sole and only duty. Hence constituted authority, godly or godless, moral or immoral, tyrannical or mild and paternal, was set over men to be submitted to and obeyed, the secular arm being rightly used to "stab, slay and kill"³ those who dared to see in their liberty as sons of God that

¹ Maritain, *Three Reformers*, p. 15. ² Troeltsch, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 510.

³ Quoted: Gordon Rupp, *Martin Luther*, p. 47.

which should find its counterpart in the social conditions of life.

And throughout its course German Lutheranism has been dogged by this heritage bequeathed by its founder, this clear-cut dichotomy between the secular and the sacred, this divorce between the inner realm of feeling and the hard realities of the external world, this unresolved tension between the outward and the inward in the totality of human experience, this false spirituality which in abstracting the inward and spiritual and setting it in sharp contradistinction to the outward and visible leaves the whole field of secular activities a ready prey to any such forces as may emerge from unregenerate human nature to lay hold upon it and exploit it for their own ends.

It is true that this was far from the result contemplated, and still less desired, by Luther himself. He was no founder of a sect organized in isolation from society. For him religion, while marked essentially by this character of inward personal spirituality, was at the same time to be a controlling factor in human life as a whole. But while he hoped at first that the Word itself, rooted in the individual soul, would effect a social as well as an individual transformation, he soon found that he could not dispense with the element of external authority. If the raw stuff of human nature and human life, conceived as inherently corrupt and evil, was to be brought under law to Christ, that could only be as it was subjected to stern disciplinary control. Yet no such authority was now available in the religious field. He had rejected it outright in its traditional ecclesiastical form; and in deference to his conviction of the essential inwardness of true religion, he could provide no adequate substitute of his own in the religious realm.

Hence he found himself compelled to fall back on the

secular authority, and to see in it the power which is of God given for the ordering of human affairs in the religious as in the civil sphere. The claims of Caesar were correlated with those of God, and the attitude of "happy and docile humility," maintained in man's relation to God, was to find its counterpart in his duty to render a similar unquestioning obedience to the civil authority throughout the whole area of its exercise. And thus in laying almost exclusive stress on the inward liberty of the spiritual man, as the sole concern of religion, he surrendered at a stroke the independence of the religious community, and its right to order its own affairs, and still more to pronounce judgment on the world, political and economic, around it. His legacy was a "political quietism," which has rendered the Church largely voiceless and ineffective in its impact on the secular field. His hope and belief were that the civil authority, in the guise of the godly prince, would act as the vicegerent of God, and would exercise the arm of force and compulsion, given it for this very purpose, in the name of God and for the promotion of Christian faith and life. In practice, by disclaiming for the Church, and leaving to the prince, authority in matters of religious concern Luther inevitably paved the way for the omnicompetent absolutist State, and for the subject condition and impotence of the Church within it. With the testimony of religion confined to the sphere of personal faith and piety, the secular power was left wholly untrammelled in the pursuit of its self-chosen policy.

Moreover, Luther's insistence on the sole and essential inwardness of true religion left no room for the demand for social change in conformity with the principles of Christ. If he can claim the title of Reformer, indeed of *the* Reformer, in the religious and ecclesiastical field, he was all against reform in the social and economic sphere. "A profound

conservative and reluctant innovator,”¹ as Lord Acton speaks of him, in this field he stood wholly by the old ways. For him society was still rooted in a feudal agrarian order, and he combated with every weapon available, rather than sought to understand and capture for Christ, in the spirit of Calvin and Calvinism, the dynamic forces of the economic field which were demanding expression. And this static conception of the social structure was reinforced by the Lutheran emphasis on the calling of the individual as itself ordained of God and to be accepted as such. The inculcation of the duty laid on each, of abiding in the station in which he was born as the God-given place within which he was to work out his spiritual salvation, left no room for a transformation of society, for new conceptions of individual freedom, or for protests against economic oppression and injustice. The only liberty which it was permissible for the individual to seek and enjoy was the inward liberty of the redeemed child of God, a liberty which he could possess to the full while remaining a serf bound to his master and the soil. For Luther “the kingdom of the world” and “the kingdom of Christ” stood over against each other, the gulf between them unbridged and unbridgeable. The complete divorce thus sanctioned between the inward and the outward, in defining the sphere with which religion is or is not concerned, in effect meant that in the field of public affairs Lutheranism sold the pass to the dominant secular authority, and silenced the voice of religious protest. Nor is it too much to say that the tradition thus inaugurated, and in practice maintained until our own day, has had a fateful effect on the history of Germany and, indeed, of Europe. It is only with the advent of National Socialism and its total demand for blind obedience to the State, irrespective of the prescriptions of the civil authority

¹ Acton, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

not only in the political but in the mental and moral spheres, that the religious obligation of resistance to the State under such circumstances has been recognized, and the recognition been given public expression at cost of liberty and even of life by outstanding leaders of the Confessional Church.

Very different proved the answer to the secular movements of the time given by the second main form taken by the continental Reformation. For so far from being content to see in the secular world of business and politics the mysterious irrational order provided by the inscrutable counsels of God as the disciplinary environment within which and in sharp contrast to which the kingdom of love, joy and peace was to come in human souls, Calvin and Calvinism saw in that world a vast field to be accepted, penetrated and subdued for God. There is, indeed, a marked element of paradox in the fact that in this most assertive form which Protestantism took, there was a conspicuous strain of continuity with the traditions of Medieval Catholicism. It repudiated the hierarchical polity of the Catholic Church, it made the letter of holy Scripture the ultimate criterion of faith and life, it set the individual justified by divine election in a standing all his own in the direct presence of his Maker: and in all these respects it was at one with the Protestant Reformation as a whole. On the other hand it was far removed from Lutheranism in its conception of God and of the divine requirement which man is called to fulfil, and in its attitude to the secular world in which it took its rise, and in particular to the new demands in the economic realm which were being voiced with increasing urgency. So far from rejecting the rising forces of nascent capitalism, and clinging to the feudal agrarian framework of society, it identified itself wholeheartedly with the former, and constituted activity and successful activity in this new field of economic enterprise the

very sphere within which religion could find its most appropriate expression. It rejected any sharp distinction between the secular and the sacred spheres, the world and the Kingdom of God, and professed the aim of bringing the whole of life under the rule of Christ.

Hence the welcome which it received, and the headway which it made, in areas where the new wine of commercial opportunity and enterprise was bursting the old bottles of the feudal order, and of the outworn medieval system of production and exchange. To the men of the rising middle class, bankers and traders, of the sixteenth century the obstacles which barred the way of commercial opportunity were intimately bound up with the continuance of priestly and Papal government. The traditional ecclesiastical order, so it seemed, was so inseparably identified with the authoritative patriarchal structure of society that the repudiation of the latter must involve the rejection of the former. Yet such was still the accepted predominance of the values of religion that somewhere and somehow, in default of the old which had to go, a new form of religious sanction, indeed a new theological justification, had to be found for the new world of economic enterprise which lay before men. Hence it was that Calvinism on the one hand and a great sphere of secular enterprise on the other met each other halfway, Calvinism finding in the latter an appropriate field for its spirit of moral and religious activism, while correspondingly the new man of business found in the teaching of Calvin and the practice of Calvinism a secure spiritual basis of justification and election on which to prosecute his characteristic activities.

It can, then, with justice be claimed that in Calvinism is to be found "the second great Christian definite social ideal of European society,"¹ an ideal which was in the event to

¹ Troeltsch, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 621.

exert its most potent and far-reaching influence not on the continent of Europe but in the Puritan movement of Britain and America, and the society which it largely served to shape. As such it supplied the needed spiritual basis and background of the modern capitalistic order of society. As a religious force setting its stamp on those fields of activity most characteristic of the modern age, it was the outcome of a conception of God which represented Him, not as redemptive mercy and pardoning grace, but as "absolute sovereign will,"¹ as the highly exalted One, the promotion of whose glory is the sole end of man. And to God as so conceived, the God of sole and sovereign majesty, answered the justified individual, conscious and confident that his calling and election were sure, and therefore free, without inward scruple or doubtfulness, "to give all his attention to the effort to mould the world and society according to the will of God."² It is true that Calvin had no thought of leaving the individual in isolation over against his Maker, as the counterpart in terms of human life to the divine sovereignty and righteousness. And still less had he any thought of leaving the varied realm of human pursuits and activities under no immediate rule but that of the individual conscience as guided by the Word of God. Rather his eye was set on the holy community corporately living under the divine law, as interpreted and administered by its appropriate organs of authority. "Hard-headed lawyer"³ as he was, with a strong bent for discipline and organization, he sought to build up a rigid institutional framework within which his grand aim of abolishing the double standard of religious obligation characteristic of the earlier epoch, and of bringing a whole society, and the lives of its members, under the direct rule of God as he

¹ Troeltsch, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 582. ² *Ib.*, p. 589.

³ Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. 106.

conceived it, could be achieved in practice. And in the Geneva of the latter half of the sixteenth century, a limited world of petty bourgeois commercialism, he found the appropriate sphere for the omnicompetent Church State of his dreams, a community within which, with the willing or unwilling co-operation of the civil with the ecclesiastical authority, the lives of its members, not only in their wider activities but in their domestic details, would be scrutinized, ordered and regulated in accordance with the Will and Word of God as these authorities interpreted it.

But the Geneva model, unique in itself, did not prove capable of reproduction on other soils. It was not by such sectional and local experiments in community that Calvinism proved a potent force in providing a needed religious basis for the activities most characteristic of the new age. Its typical product was rather the individual bred in the Puritan school, sure of himself because sure of God, carrying with him into the world of secular activities, and particularly into the widening field of production and exchange, the practice of those habits of disciplined industry which he came increasingly to regard as the main Christian virtue. It was, then, naturally in the rising middle class of merchants and traders, bent on exploiting to the full the widening opportunities opened to them, that Puritanism took deepest root. The men of this class were forward-looking in outlook, bent not on renouncing, but on entering and subduing for God, the secular world of their time. For it was for God and not for themselves that they toiled and wrought. With them the religious motive was paramount. With them religion was far from being a mere spiritual cloak of covetousness and the pursuit of gain. They set themselves to break down the traditional barrier between the monastic and the lay world, and to carry into the field of secular business standards of

ascetic discipline the practice of which had hitherto been confined to the monastery. Not wealth for wealth's sake, but wealth pursued and gained for the glory of God and the good of society was their professed aim. Their one all-engrossing passion was that of subduing to the sovereign Will of God, as they conceived and obeyed it, the institutions of society, private and public, in the moulding of which they could themselves play a responsible part.

Indirectly, then, Calvin and Calvinism won their most signal triumphs in providing a needed religious mould within which a new ideal of human character, and of human society, could take initial shape. In its stress on the self-reliant individual, in its emphasis on work for work's sake, and its condemnation of idleness as an unforgivable vice, and above all in its singling out of pursuits concerned with economic welfare as the main interest of man, the field in which, and by his success or failure in which, he was to prove his worth in the sight of God and man, in all these ways, if our country may be taken as typical, Calvinism provided the initial religious impetus in shaping the civilization characteristic of the modern Western world. It has indeed been claimed that Puritanism, within and without the Church of England, was "the true English Reformation"¹; and if a great religious movement may be judged by its capacity to transform and remould the structure of society, the claim is one which can be largely conceded. Certainly it was the Puritan strain in the England of the century of the Reformation which set the seal of religious sanction on an increasingly commercial age, and which indeed also interposed such restraint on the acquisitive instinct and the exclusive pursuit of gain as the fear of God could exercise. It was not that the reformed English Church lacked prophetic voices to denounce greed and

¹ Tawney, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

covetousness in commercial relations. But conservative as it was in its adherence to the traditions, social and religious, of the past, its warnings were largely couched in terms irrelevant to the conditions of a new age, and were increasingly ignored by the rising secular forces of the time.¹

Nor, indeed, did Puritanism, however far in the earlier stages it proved efficacious in both sanctioning, and at the same time restraining, absorption in commercial pursuits, prove able to retain its hold on the activities characteristic of an acquisitive society. It was not that religion was overtly discarded by the representatives of a commercial civilization. It was rather that religion was decreasingly accepted as providing a constant and independent moral criterion of their weekday pursuits, and was thrust into a department of its own. Having served its purpose in providing a higher sanction for the new world of commercial opportunity, it could all too easily be dropped when the new order of capitalistic society had taken shape and adopted a philosophy of its own in which it could find its justification. When it came to be recognized by the prevailing school of thought and practice that economics was one thing and religion another, each to be confined within its own limits and governed by principles peculiar to itself, an age had dawned in which the sacred ceased even to claim, and much more to exercise, supremacy in and over the secular field.

Such was the answer, negative or positive, of religion, as reorganized in the Churches of the Continental Reformation, to the challenge of the great movement in the secular sphere for which the Renaissance stood: an answer which threw a vivid light on the approaching forfeiture by religion of its place of acknowledged priority in the wider affairs and interests of men. Already the secular was threatening to dis-

¹ Cf. Tawney, *op. cit.*, pp. 184 ff.

place the sacred in the estimation and practice of those who were most effectually setting their stamp on the new age. In Lutheran areas the adoption of the principle "cujus regio ejus religio" was itself an acknowledgment of the subordination of religion to the demands of political and civil unity, while in circles which welcomed the doctrine and discipline of Calvinism, with its recognition of economic enterprise as a main field of activity, in which God could be glorified and His will be done, concentration on success in this field could all too easily result in a growing disregard for the restraints which religion purported to impose on the acquisitive impulse. And further, preoccupied as they were with man's personal standing with God, neither of these main streams of continental reform proved ready or able to provide scope within the frame of life for which each stood, for that revived interest in the humanities which was the primary positive contribution of the Renaissance to a wider and fuller human life. Indeed, so far from attempting to do so, the tendency was rather to exclude the arts which adorn life, and seek to satisfy the demand for beauty of expression, from the sphere with which religion had any concern, and to condemn them outright as "altogether unseemly and unlawful to Christians."¹

Nor can it be claimed that the Catholicism of the Counter-Reformation proved qualified to continue to fulfil the traditional mission of the Church, that of bringing into subjection to the sacred law the varied departments of human life, as they took shape in a new age. It was not that, with the rupture of Catholic unity, the ruling idea and tradition of Christendom perished. The tradition lived on, and in what has been well called "the age of Baroque"² found expression

¹ Prynne, *Histriomastix* (quoted: Grierson, *Cross Currents in English Literature of the Seventeenth Century*, p. 71).

² Watkin, *Catholic Art and Culture*, pp. 93 ff.

in the fashioning of a characteristic and in some respects genuine "Catholic culture of the Counter-Reformation."¹ Equally true, however, is it that the Baroque age represented an autumn fruitage suggestive less of the summer flowering which preceded it than of the wintry blight which was to follow. For the forces which were asserting themselves in the secular realm, and were increasingly to do so, proved too potent for reconciliation in an organic synthesis with the claims of religion. Moreover, to the establishment of such a new synthesis there was now lacking the weighty support of a Church all-embracing in its membership and all-pervading in its influence. The Church of the Papal obedience had forfeited its character of universality, and with it its acknowledged authority to subordinate every realm of life to the law of Christ. It let slip a great opportunity of meeting with the prestige of a united Christendom the demands which the Renaissance age was making; and the failure of the Conciliar movement in the first half of the fifteenth century, with the resultant consolidation of Papal autocracy, could only issue in the rupture of Catholic unity, and the reorganization of religion in separate communions, each jealous of its own independence and self-sufficiency. Inevitably, therefore, in default of any attempt to find common ground with the Churches of the Reformation, that of the Counter-Reformation was forced back, on its part, on the need of a reformulation of its doctrine. The long-drawn-out Council, in which the basis of modern Catholicism was laid, was primarily concerned with redefining Catholic dogma in forms clear-cut enough to repudiate the denials and affirmations of Protestantism, and thus with the entrenchment of the Church within its own institutional fortress.

A task, however, of equal, perhaps of even greater

¹ Grierson, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

urgency, now forced on the Church, was that of winning for itself such recognition of its rights as was compatible with the concentration of power in the national States and monarchies of the age. Here, in strongly centralized national governments, supported by a growing national sentiment, the counterpart in the political sphere of Papal absolutism, was a force which had come to stay, which would increase in strength as the modern age advanced, and with which the Church was compelled to come to terms. On the side of organization the Church was largely preoccupied with the attempt to vindicate its supra-national status as against the tendency to subject every department of the nation's life, including the religious, to ends of national policy. No longer was the State as formerly the civil department of a Christian society. It was itself a *societas perfecta* over against the Church, and the mutual relations of Church and State had now to be adjusted on the assumption of the omnicompetence of each in its own sphere. Nor was it possible to draw a clear-cut line between the spheres within which the jurisdiction of one or the other was paramount. If the Church could rightly claim a voice in matters of political concern, on the ground of their raising moral and spiritual issues, so too with equal cogency could national governments assert their competence in the ordering of religious affairs, as inseparably bound up with interests of national unity and security. Hence the long-drawn-out "jurisdictionalist"¹ controversy, and the series of attempts, through Concordats, Pragmatic Sanctions and other means, to work out a *modus vivendi* between Church and State, such as, along with the retention of the confessional Catholic character of the State, would confine the exercise of the Church's authority within limits which would exclude the danger of divided loyalties within the same realm.

¹ Cf. Luigi Sturzo, *op. cit.*, pp. 321 ff.

There could, however, obviously be only one outcome of such preoccupation on the part of the Church with the assertion of its own institutional interests. It could no longer adequately fulfil its traditional rôle of providing the mould within which the rising secular movements of the age could be subdued to spiritual ends, of setting the impress of the sanctions of religion upon the new order, political, economic and cultural, which was taking the place of the old. With the Church primarily concerned with its own reorganization, fighting defensive battles against rival authorities, religious and political, establishing the conditions of its own future, the world of secular forces was in the main left to establish itself on the basis of untrammelled autonomy. The *philosophia perennis* indeed remained valid as ever. But it was largely kept in cold storage, and the urgent task of a restatement of the traditional Christian social ethic, in view of new movements in the economic and social spheres, was left unattempted. It is, indeed, only in quite recent years, and more particularly with the reassertion by Pope Leo XIII of the Thomist philosophy, and the issue of a series of *Encyclicals* during his Pontificate on the social question, culminating in the *Rerum Novarum* of 1891, that a beginning has been made with such an attempted restatement, applying the fundamental postulates of a Catholic political philosophy to the conditions of a new age.

Meanwhile, however, the Church concentrated itself on preserving its peculiar treasure untarnished. If it drew tighter its institutional limits, and laid emphasis even to excess on the demands of centralized organization, it manifested at the same time a fresh flowering of the spirit. Here was a spontaneous movement from within and from below, balancing the emphasis on rigid jurisdiction imposed from above. The era of the Counter-Reformation was marked by

the reform of existing and the foundation of new religious communities, combining zealous missionary and pastoral activity with the disciplined life of prayer and contemplation, and with a renewed emphasis on the "vertical" factor in religion: and it is perhaps by its unwavering assertion of the reality and supremacy of the supernatural that the Church of the Papal obedience has rendered its most signal service in a secularist age, at all costs preserving the salt of sanctity from becoming savourless.¹ Yet this very emphasis has meant in practice that the outstanding positive movements of the Renaissance age in the secular realm have risen and taken organized shape with no attempt on the religious side to meet them halfway, and to elicit and assert their spiritual significance. While the Church withdrew increasingly into itself, and concentrated its efforts on the nourishment of private devotion and on the discipline and edification of its own members, the world of secular interests was left to go its own way, pending the time, if such should come, when the conditions should be ripe for a fresh integration of secular and sacred in a renewed Christendom.

Meanwhile the Church in this country had its own answer to make to the challenge of the Renaissance. It had emerged from its rupture with Rome, and was thus compelled to undertake the task not only of reorganizing its polity but of re-establishing its theological foundations. And in doing so it had to fight a battle on two fronts, and to justify its own central position as against the more logical and aggressive attitude of Rome on the one hand and that of those imbued with the principles of the Continental Reformation on the other. Placed thus on the defensive, it was exposed to the weakness inherent in an attitude of negation based only on the rejection of the two competing alternatives. And so long

¹ Cf. Watkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 102 f.; Luigi Sturzo, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

indeed as it was content to assert "that virtuous mediocrity which our Church observes between the meretricious gaudiness of the Church of Rome and the squalid sluttishness of fanatic conventicles,"¹ it still lacked a positive standing of its own in the divided Christendom of the new age. The outstanding service, however, rendered by Hooker and the English theologians of the century of the Reformation was far from being confined to holding a defensive front. Rejecting alike the dogmatic rigidity of the Rome of the Counter-Reformation and the extreme Biblicism of the Reformed Churches of the Continent, English theology made its appeal to history and reason, and, indeed, to the facts of life. Historically it took its stand on Christian antiquity, and found its justification in its continuity with Patristic Christianity, and particularly the Christianity of the Greek fathers, which as a deposit of the undivided Church of the early centuries was marked by a liberality and wholeness of outlook conspicuous by its absence in the Puritanism of the day. It was thus concerned to show that there was a positive alternative to that whole conception of religion represented by Rome on the one side and that represented by Puritanism on the other, and that in claiming to represent that alternative it could appeal to Apostolic and post-Apostolic tradition with greater confidence and assurance than either of its rivals. In an age of clashing and conflicting forces, religious and secular, the theology and practice of the English Church sought to point the way to synthesis and reconciliation. Its great achievement has indeed been well described as that of having "absorbed the Renaissance without forfeiting the Catholic tradition."² And as the outcome there was laid the

¹ Simon Patrick, *An Account of the New Sect of Latitude-men* (1662), quoted in *Anglicanism* (S.P.C.K.), p. 12.

² Massingham, *The Tree of Life*, p. 97.

foundation of a theology true to the fundamental dogma of the Incarnation, such as would provide scope within a framework of religion for the positive values for which Renaissance humanism stood.

Nor was this service rendered only in the field of theology. The same attitude found concrete and visible expression in the Church's liturgical worship, and a service equal in importance to that of establishing the structure of an ecclesiastical polity in keeping with Apostolic tradition was rendered by a school of Liturgists, Andrewes, Thorndike, Cumber and others, whose contribution in this field was to discover the English Prayer Book, and from its treasures to "bring forth things new and old" as the content of a form and outline of liturgical worship embodying that same organic wholeness of outlook and of life, that genuine philosophy of Christ, which was also being vindicated in theological terms. They contended that in the Book of Common Prayer, as interpreted in the spirit as well as in the letter, was furnished a standard of corporate worship uniting the three elements of "dogma, prayer and life,"¹ which cannot be ruptured without forfeiture of the meaning of life itself. Above all they sought to assert the centrality of the Eucharist in the public worship of the Church, and to present it as the symbolic expression of life in all its variety and richness, unified, interpreted, and raised to the highest significance through being brought into the sanctuary.

And yet again the characteristically Anglican, not to say English, instinct for wholeness of outlook and of life, life too on all sides as focused in religion, a synthesis of the values of the Renaissance and the Reformation, found expression in the literature, and particularly in the poetry, of the age. It was reflected in both Spenser and Milton, both of them children

¹ Addleshaw, *The High Church Tradition*, p. 19.

of the Renaissance as well as of the Reformation, though of both it can perhaps be said that the two streams, secular and sacred, ran side by side in their work rather than converged in a single river. And it is rather in the humbler poets of the English countryside, Traherne, Vaughan, and George Herbert, that this "note as of a Christian humanism in the religious poetry of the century which is most distinctively Anglican"¹ found most characteristic expression, a humanism which, more particularly in Herbert's writings, integrated the common things and interests of men with the ordered discipline of religion, and directly related the truths of the Christian revelation, commemorated in turn in the recurring seasons of the Church's year, to the secular concerns of everyday life.

Such, then, was the synthesis aimed at and achieved in the theology, worship and literature of seventeenth-century England. It gave concrete expression to a genuine Christian humanism, which deriving ultimately from the truth of the Incarnation could find room within a religious setting for new movements in art and science, and for those pleasures and pastimes adorning life which were so rigidly excluded from the Puritan discipline. It is true that the balanced poise so secured was a "highly precarious"² one, difficult to maintain in face of the hostile forces thrusting their way to the front and brought to bear upon it from both the religious and the secular sides. Yet for a time it was maintained, and during the brief period which intervened "between a troubled past and a yet more troubled future to come religion, humanism and chivalry met together in peace and planted the standard of the good life in our native earth."³

In the event the times proved too hard for the maintenance

¹ Grierson, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

² Massingham, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

³ *Ib.*, p. 97.

of that standard of reconciliation, of an organic synthesis of nature, man and God so established. Cut off from its traditional association with the Catholic tradition of the West, unaware as yet of its spiritual affinity with the isolated orthodox Churches of the East, the island Church lacked the strength and independence which it needed to assert itself in face of the main secular forces of the age. On the one hand, it was wanting in any well-grounded theory of the Church as a *societas perfecta* distinct from Commonwealth and State. It inherited, and sought to maintain within insular limits, the medieval conception of a single society which in one aspect was the civil community and in another the Church, membership in one identical with that in the other. Between the era of the Renaissance and Reformation and the Middle Ages there was, however, this fundamental difference, that in the England of the Tudors and early Stuarts, reversing the medieval order, it was the State as embodied in the Monarch and in Parliament which claimed and was accorded supremacy in matters not temporal only but ecclesiastical, and the Church became little more than "the ecclesiastical department of the State,"¹ with religion "used to lend a moral sanction to secular social policy." This traditional ruling conception of the identification of Church and Commonwealth, which found a leading defender and exponent in Hooker himself, and was implemented in the iron discipline of the Laudian regime, was to incur its own fatal nemesis in the increasing forfeiture by the Church of that independence inherent in its very nature, and which it can only surrender at the cost of surrendering the values of which it is the accredited witness.

The inevitable result of its intimate association with the constituted order of the State was to array against it the

¹ Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. 165.

rising popular forces of the time. And not least was that lack of a definite standing over against the State, and the identification of the Church with a despotic regime, reflected in its failure effectively to assert itself and the principles for which it stood in face of the aggressive commercialism of the age, its spirit of rampant individualism, and its prevailing creed "that the individual is absolute master of his own and, within the limits set by positive law, may exploit it with a single eye to his pecuniary advantage."¹ Here, again, in its conception of right order the Church inherited and sought to carry on in practice the medieval tradition. It refused to acquiesce in that fatal dichotomy which threatened to prevail between commercial methods on the one hand and the sanctions of religion on the other. It continued to inveigh against the sin of usury and exorbitant profit-seeking. It continued to prosecute offenders in its own courts. Yet both its preaching and its practice were increasingly defied as an intolerable anachronism in a new age which would no longer be bound by medieval standards. The ethical code to which it appealed, as it was to find, was "forged to meet the conditions of a very different environment from that of commercial England in the seventeenth century,"² and its attempt to retain cases of usurious exaction within the competence of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction was tolerated with growing resentment. Driven thus from its rightful place of prophetic authority in the world of commerce, unable or unwilling to adjust its traditional sociology to "an age of impersonal finance, world markets, and a capitalistic organization of industry,"³ it came gradually to acquiesce in its subservience to the State, its acceptance of the existing social order, and the philosophy of the propertied classes. It had no weapon

¹ Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. 146.

² *Ib.*, p. 183. ³ *Ib.*, p. 184.

forged and sharp with which to meet the rising forces of competitive capitalism, and when at a later date the overwhelming onset of the Industrial Revolution transformed the whole traditional pattern of English life, it stood aside speechless, impotent and ignored. Nor was it until the second half of the nineteenth century, when it had long lost its hold on the industrial masses of the new England, that the Church awoke again in any sense to its social mission and to the task of working out and applying a Christian sociology adequate to the demands of a new and rapidly changing age.

THE RISING TIDE OF SECULARISM

IF it is true, as has been maintained, that "an ordered society," a civilization characterized by "right order," is one which is "consciously administered on principles which extend beyond itself . . . whose activities have a direction consistent with what are believed to be supreme values,"¹ then here is the explanation of those forces of disorder which have set their stamp so potently on the post-medieval age, and the outcome of which has reached its climax in our own day. Rooted in the Biblical pattern of life, finding its supreme manifestation in the Incarnation, vindicated in a philosophy of history by Augustine, consciously accepted as the ruling conception of a whole age and embodied in the medieval order of society was the principle of a divine authority, an ultimate and binding standard of reference, given from above, as that under which all human life stood, and by which it was unified. That there was and is a given "pattern in the mount,"² a super-earthly realm, a divine plan made known in its fulness in Christ, which it was man's primary mission to discern and accept, to embody in earthly institutions, and to make the master light of all his seeing and all his doing, here was the acknowledged axiom in the thought and practice of a whole millennium. Here was the ruling idea, the common faith, which on the inward side provided the bond of unity for Medieval Christendom, and in default of which the structural bond of Papal and ecclesiastical jurisdiction would have proved wholly inadequate for

¹ Slesser, *Order and Disorder*, p. 18.

² Heb. viii, 5.

its purpose. And correlatively more potent in its disintegrating influence on society than even the break-up of the great ecclesiastical structure has proved the dissipation of the faith, the common ideal which once constituted the ruling factor in the unity of Europe.

For it is the increasing rejection, or rather the ignoring as irrelevant, of any such transcendent authority and standard of reference as valid in and over every sphere of human activity, an increasing endeavour on the part of Western man to order the world to a shape and pattern of his own choosing and by standards relative only to his own self-selected ends, a false and exclusive humanism which sets the destiny of man wholly within his own powers of fulfilment, which is a prevailing characteristic of the centuries which followed the disintegration of the medieval order.

In this assertion it is assuredly not intended to imply that the medieval era represented a golden age in the history of human society, and still less that its ruling idea was more than partially reflected in working practice; or again that it provides a model on which a return to a Christian order in our own age can or should be patterned. It has already been pointed out that medieval Christendom was confined within a limited geographical area even of the Christian world, and that in the form which it took in Western Europe it presupposed and was bound up with a static hierarchical structure of society, providing indeed scope for the limited range of interests and pursuits characteristic of the age, but by its very nature resisting change and expansion. We could not, if we would, nor would we if we could, return to the authoritarian theocratic ordering of society for which it stood.

And again in asserting that the modern age is marked by a prevailing spirit of self-assertive secularism we are very far

from condemning that age wholesale from the standpoint represented in these Lectures. The modern age has burst through the cramping limitations, however willingly accepted, within which medieval life was confined, and in many directions has thrown up and revealed potencies of human nature, vast fields of endeavour and achievement unsuspected in an earlier time, and a widening of scope in the whole field of secular activities, to be welcomed as positive elements in a fuller and more abundant life. And the task presented to those who are looking and working for a restored Christendom under the conditions of our age is not to destroy but to fulfil, not to condemn but to save, and to find room, in an order of life based on the unchanging assumptions of the Christian revelation, for all those positive potencies and values which the modern age has unveiled.

It is, however, in the reassertion of the validity of these Christian assumptions that we can still look for guidance to that earlier epoch. For with all its limitations, the medieval era possessed, and with all its grandeur of endeavour and achievement the modern age has lacked, the key to right order in the temporal realm. That right order, right that is not in deference to a priori dogmatic presuppositions, and still less to the relative claims of political theory, but right as answering to the very nature of man, is one which is based ultimately on the recognition of a transcendent realm, a revealed will of God, a dayspring from on high, as that under which all life stands, and by submission to which it alone attains its fulness of meaning and value. And in contradistinction from this standard, what is implied in the selected title of this Lecture, "The Rising Tide of Secularism," is on the one hand a growing confidence, gaining momentum as the modern age progressed, in the capacities inherent in man as adequate to all his needs, and on the other hand a

correlative tendency to disown in reference to one sphere of activity after another the validity, if not indeed the very existence, of any regulative standard higher and other than that of its own choosing, and commanding unqualified obedience.

Concealed for a time by the dazzling successes achieved, here, in a wilful blindness to the hard fact of man's ultimate allegiance, in those great spheres of organized activity in which his creative capacity has found expression, to the kingdom and righteousness of God as made known in Christ, is the root of those elements of disruption and corruption which have in greater or less degree undermined the outwardly imposing structure of modern civilization, and have revealed their full potency for havoc and destruction within our own generation. History indeed has proved to have its revenges. For in the very assertion of unqualified autonomy on behalf of one great sphere of organized life after another, in which human capacity has advanced from triumph to triumph, those achievements have themselves been robbed of their full potentialities, and their true significance, only then realized and revealed as they are taken up into and integrated in a transcendent order higher than themselves, and again and again have been perverted to ends destructive not only of the outward fabric of human society but of the spiritual freedom of man.

In reference to the theme of the present Lecture, concerned with some major forms in which the secularist spirit of the modern age has asserted itself, let it be emphasized that by the term secularism we understand an order of life, and an attitude to life, based on the assumption of the sole reality and the sole sufficiency of the secular, as the realm within which, and in relation to which, the nature of man finds its interpretation and his destiny its fulfilment. The term

emphatically does not imply a condemnation of the secular as such in the name of the sacred. In itself, so far from being alien to a Christian order of society, the secular is an essential constituent of it, its natural ground, the material which stands ready to be taken up into and given form and meaning within it. Indeed it is only within the Christian context that the secular as such emerges and attains its true significance. It is only as it is set over against and in relation to the spiritual realm that the rights of the secular are respected, its value declared and its real, if limited, autonomy vindicated. It is there, and it emerges in ever-new and varied forms, as the given material of the transmuting energies of the sacred, by its very submission to which it alone can bring its fruit to perfection. And to reject or ignore it as irrelevant for the sphere of the sacred, to condemn it as inherently unredeemable, to draw a rigid line between the two realms and to put assunder what God in Christ has joined together invites its own inevitable nemesis in an answering repudiation of the sacred, and the arrogant claim to assert the whole meaning of life in exclusively this-worldly terms.

For, however occasioned, the spirit of secularism stands for revolt against the sanctions, absolute and transcendent, for which religion stands, and by regard for which the positive potentialities of human nature can alone find their fulfilment. It is rooted, and finds its justification, in a conception of man as wholly a creature of the temporal order. It denies and rules out in him any affinity with, or capacity for, the divine. Indeed, it repudiates the divine itself as a realm of eternal values, and claiming man's ultimate allegiance. For it man has an origin, a nature and a destiny all of which find their meaning and fulfilment within the time process. For it there is no duality in human nature, no heavenly citizenship

over against that of the State, no birth from above as well as from below. "Of the earth earthy"¹ man must fulfil himself in earthly terms, in the political, economic or other sphere, or not at all. And the institutions in which his outlook and interests find social expression, and which in turn mould his character and conduct, evoke and direct his energies, are established and maintained on the avowed assumption that man owes no allegiance to any sovereign authority beyond and higher than they.

Such is the conception of man on the assumption of which secularism arises, and the secularist order of society takes shape. And as such it is a modern phenomenon. It arises within and as a revolt against an established and recognized Christian tradition. It is no mere wiping out of a Christian past, no mere return to the one-level standard of Graeco-Roman civilization. It is post-Christian rather than pre-Christian. The tension once revealed, the duality once established in human nature and life by the Christian revelation remain. The realm of the spiritual has emerged and won recognition once for all, and however much it may be denied in theory and practice, driven underground and disavowed, still makes its presence felt, and is only too apt to revenge itself for its repression by assuming demonic forms, and by attaching itself to one or other pseudo-absolute within the earthly and temporal sphere. It re-emerges in monstrous and perverted forms of idolatry, and the high tide of secularism is reached when it poses as itself a religion and claims religious sanction for its standards and aims. And, more particularly as a phenomenon of the Western world and as it has emerged full-blown in our own time, it represents a concerted revolt against Europe's age-long Christian tradition, and an attempt to rebuild the fabric of European life on a basis which

¹ I Cor. xv, 47.

represents a standing denial of the subjection of man to any law, universal and divine.

And it is in the nation State, in what has come to be known as its totalitarian form, that secularism, as we have defined it, has in our own day found its most complete and uncompromising institutional expression: and even if events appear to have shown that the totalitarian State, in its National Socialist or Fascist form, is a passing phenomenon, and its course an ugly chapter in European history now closed, it demands notice if only as throwing a fierce light on forces long latent in the body of Western society, indeed latent in human nature itself, which unless countered on the spiritual plane may yet re-emerge in other forms, armed too with new weapons which science has put or may put at the service of what has been called "the revolution of nihilism."¹

It is characteristic of the State so organized to bring within and under it, as subserving its self-chosen ends, every aspect of life, public and private, outward and inward, all realms of action and all realms of thought. It stands for the all over-riding predominance of the political factor and the political interest. Not only does it represent the express denial that there is or can be a higher loyalty than that owed to the State; for it the things which are Caesar's are identified with the things that are God's. It elevates the State itself into an absolute, the focus of a mystical cult, the object of unqualified worship and devotion. It is characteristic of it, as so arrogating to itself an all-comprehensive control of human life, that it suppresses any claim to independence on the part of subsidiary or voluntary associations existing or formed within it for their own specific purposes. All such associations, political or religious, cultural or industrial, claiming the right to recognition on the basis of a relative autonomy,

¹ Hermann Rauschning, *Die Revolution des Nihilismus*.

must either be dissolved or become subservient departments of the central authority. The State is no longer content to be the *Communitas Communitatum*, established for the express purpose of regulating, indeed, in the interests of society as a whole, but also of encouraging and protecting, the exercise of initiative and independence on the part of voluntary groups with their own ends and rules of association, and with fundamental rights anterior in some cases to those of the State itself. For all such associations the choice is that of unqualified accordance (*Gleichschaltung*) with the existing standards of State supremacy or liquidation.

Indeed, the whole tendency of such a regime is to leave the State standing out, stark, sole and supreme, over against the mass of individual citizens. Even the family loses its freedom and integrity: and the individual as such, taken in himself, or in the mass, remains as the plastic depersonalized material on which the State acts and through which it pursues its ends. Moreover, the State creates its own moral standards. It may still use terms, such as justice and right, borrowed from the armoury of traditional morality, but in fact it recognizes no law but that of its own calculated interest. It is indeed its flagrant repudiation of the sovereignty of law, and its prostitution of judicial procedure for political ends, that constitute its most glaring departure from the European tradition.

Yet that is not all. For even the pursuit of truth itself, whether in the realm of historical or biological science, or other departments of enquiry and research, is no longer disinterested and untrammelled. It, too, is harnessed to ends of State, and forced to subserve the purposes which the propaganda machine exists to promote: and the University itself is perverted from being an independent centre for the pursuit of divine and secular learning into a major instrument for the justification of theories of human nature and history.

with which the State finds its profitable to impregnate the mind of a whole people.¹ Its major claim is thus to establish a wholly new order, in keeping with the demands of a new age, and to rebuild society and civilization on wholly new foundations, subversive of those standards rooted in the Christian tradition which, it is protested, have more than outlived their adequacy for the demands of human life.

Had we not ourselves in fact experienced it, it might well have been regarded as inconceivable that at this stage in the history of Western and Central Europe so complete a "rattling into barbarism," to use a prophetic phrase of the late Lord Rosebery, could be effected, a revolution subversive not only of all civil and social liberty, but of the liberty of the mind and spirit, negating all accepted moral standards, all recognized cultural values, all the hard-won graces of civilized life. At least it might leave on us the impression of a wholly new phenomenon of the last quarter of a century, a political monster emerging fully armed from the abyss in our own generation, and now hurled back into the darkness from which it came. Yet, in fact, it only represents the concentrated outcome of forces at work in European society throughout the modern epoch, forces which have attained their full momentum in our own time through the far-reaching effectiveness of modern instruments and methods of social control, and the subtle penetrating influence which with the aid of such instruments can be exerted, in their own interest, by those who hold in their hands the reins of centralized power in a modern State.

As the embodiment of unqualified autonomy in the political sphere the forces in question run back to the emergence of the self-contained nation State which signalized the break-

¹ Cf. Norman Baynes, "Intellectual Liberty and Totalitarian Claims." The Romanes Lecture: 1942.

up of the unity, religious and political, of medieval Christendom, due in part to a recoil against the over-reaching of ecclesiastical predominance in the temporal sphere, and yet more to the sheer need of providing new centres of civil and social order to replace the outworn feudal structure. It was not that in itself the rise of national units of centralized government was symptomatic of a disposition to repudiate the Christian tradition in which Europe had grown to maturity, to displace religion and the religious institution as a major factor in the ordering of the nation's life, or indeed to discard the conception of Christendom itself as a single order of society of which the recognized bond was still a common faith and a common law divine. For too long and too completely had religion been the governing factor in the thought and life of Europe to be quickly dethroned from its predominance. In our own country the "Elizabethan world-picture" was still fundamentally religious, based upon a "chain of being"¹ which represented human life and the world of nature as, in ascending and descending stages, linked with and dependent upon the divine.

Indeed, so rooted was the tradition of the religious world-view that it maintained its prestige throughout the century following the Elizabethan epoch: and if a great religious Epic was the form in which, towards the close of the Middle Ages, Dante could sum up the world-outlook of a whole era, it was still possible three and a half centuries later for the English world-view to find classical embodiment in yet another religious Epic, representative of the Puritan and Protestant standpoint for which Milton stood, the counterpart to that of medieval Catholicism. *Paradise Lost* appeared indeed midway through a century in which human thought was turning with increasing interest and insistence from concen-

¹ Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World-Picture*, pp. 23 ff.

tration on the heavens to concentration on the earth, seeing in "mechanico-materialistic explanations"¹ the key to "that picture of reality, of things-in-themselves, which alone could satisfy contemporary demands."² From Bacon in the early years of the century to Locke at its close the prevailing tendency was that of a revolt against the doctrinaire deductive methods of scholasticism and a seeking of truth through the direct observation both of the physical world and of the mind of man.

Milton thus lived and worked in the midstream of "a great intellectual revolution,"³ and in view of the main trend of his age his great Heroic poem, set in a scriptural framework, was "much like an isolated volcano thrusting up through the philosophic plains, and drawing its fire from deeper and older levels of spiritual energy."⁴ And yet the contrast between his outlook and that most characteristic of his age was not so sharp as it might at first sight appear to be. For if there was a marked vein of optimistic humanism in Milton, which he found it difficult to reconcile with the Biblical background of his chosen subject, there was an equally marked vein of genuine piety in the leading men of thought and science of the century, and the common assumption that, however far they carried the study of nature as the one sure road to the truth, room must still be found for the affirmations of the Christian faith. Indeed, for them, Nature was itself a second volume of Scripture in which the hand of God could be traced, and even Hobbes who asserted "the sole reality of body"⁴ found himself compelled to make some concession to the religious standpoint.

Yet the main trend of the age was unmistakable. There was a steady movement towards a sharp dichotomy in that

¹ Basil Willey, *The Seventeenth-century Background*, p. 7.

² *Ib.*, p. 264.

³ *Ib.*, p. 226.

⁴ *Ib.*, p. 98.

organic wholeness of view and of life based upon a common faith in a transcendent order of reality which had prevailed in earlier centuries, a sundering of the truths of faith from the truths of science, and a banishment of the former to the circumference from the centre of men's interest. A beginning had been made in the disruption of man's life and the severing of it into separate departments, each concerned to assert its own independence, and indeed in the singling out of the individual, the ego, as the fundamental unit, the *ἀρχή* of a new world-outlook, and the disowning of the divine except as the intellectual coping-stone of a man-designed and man-built structure of reality.

We have pointed out that in the domain of practical affairs it was in the political sphere that, along with such concessions as had still to be made to the religious factor, the assertion of an untrammelled authority was first made and carried to the furthest limit. For with the rupture of the old society, of which the Church was the outward bond, the nation State came into its own as providing the new framework of ordered life and social organization needed to take its place. And with its rise to predominance in the new Europe interests of State came to take precedence of all other considerations in the determination of policy. Nor did religion make any effective resistance to this elevation of political over moral considerations in the administration of States, whether in matters of national or of international concern.¹ We have already called attention to the abdication which Lutheranism stood for in this sphere, and the sharp dichotomy which it represented between the outward and the inward, the public and the private concerns of life, with

¹ In spite of outstanding protests, above all, that of the Dominican Francesco da Vitoria in his *De Indis et de Jure Belli*, published in 1557, and that of Hugo Grotius in the following century, cp. Luigi Sturzo, op. cit., p. 270.

the consequent surrender of the former to the unrestrained control of constituted civil authority. Moreover, in States which for religious purposes maintained their allegiance to Rome, the centralized absolutism of the Counter-Reformation Papacy found its answer and counterpart in absolute monarchies resolved to accept in relation to the Church Catholic only such terms as left them, by direct right, supreme in the area of their administration ; and a main characteristic of the France of the old regime, to take the most characteristic example, was the endeavour to achieve a working compromise between the two overlapping absolutisms such as would leave the monarchy unquestionably master in its own house, a claim which leading ecclesiastics themselves, holding high office in both State and Church, were the first to vindicate.

Meanwhile, what the religious institution may have gained in privilege and State recognition, it lost in independence. The prophetic voice of religion, as the accredited guardian of principles of universal validity, grew faint ; and not least it failed decisively to assert the authority of these principles in the field of public policy. The alliance of throne and altar came to stand in popular opinion for a regime of reaction, tyranny and injustice. It was therefore inevitable, as the revolutionary tide rose higher in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and as the insistent demand for radical change in the political and social spheres found expression, that these popular movements should have taken a violently anticlerical form ; and that where, as in modern France and Italy, popular governments were established, those governments should have been markedly laic and secular in character, and however far tolerating the exercise of religion should have confined it within a limited sphere of its own, and have minimized its influence on public affairs and national life.

What, then, can be discerned, from the standpoint of our theme, as a prevailing characteristic of the modern age is not the repudiation of religion as such, but its relegation to a private and domestic sphere, as the other-worldly refuge of the individual soul, and its tacit renunciation of any claim to be a main informing and determining influence in the wider fields of activity. In practice life tended to be reorganized on the basis of a treaty in terms of which the boundary line between the secular and the sacred realms was rigidly delimited, a treaty which in fact meant the confinement of the sacred, as standing for the acknowledged supremacy of the revealed Will of God as the ultimate law for man, within an ever-narrowing sphere, and on the other hand a widening area, both of thought and practice, governed by exclusively secular assumptions.

This steady extension of the domain in reference to which the sanctions of religion, formerly accepted as ultimately binding in every sphere, were discarded as irrelevant can in large part be attributed to the self-confidence engendered by the sheer success of the men of the new age in mastering their surroundings and moulding the world of their time to a pattern of their own choosing. But a factor contributing to the secularist spirit of the age, of which account must also be taken, was the answer which religion made, or failed to make, to this great surge of striving and achievement. For the response to this genuine expansion of the human spirit on the part of religion and the religious institution was, in the main, to leave it to go its own way, as a world outside that with which religion was concerned, and to make little or no attempt to claim these new fields of interest and activity for Christ, or to think out a Christian philosophy or a Christian sociology adequate to the movements of the age. There was a far-reaching "trahison des clercs" in this field, and the

tendency to confine the concern of religion within the limits of the religious institution.

The reassertion of the sacred, as a realm by contact with which, and by submission to which, the secular could alone find its place and reveal its significance in an integrated order of life, depended in the main on the attitude of the Church, as the repository of sacred values and the visible representative of the transcendent realm, and its readiness not merely to deny the self-sufficiency of the secular for all human needs, but to declare in relation to it the relevance of the divine, in terms adequate to and commensurate with that enlarged sphere of enquiry and pursuit on which the Europe of the new age had entered. The failure of the Church, and this is true of the Church on either side of the Reformation breach, lay not in a lack of insistence on the absoluteness of the claims of God on human allegiance, however mediated and fulfilled, but in the limited area within which the validity of those claims was vindicated. So preoccupied was the Church, both of the Reformation and of the Counter-Reformation, with its own institutional needs, that its primary task and mission, that of asserting the sovereignty of Christ and of the Christian law in and over the secular realm, was allowed to go by default. More far-reaching and disruptive in its effects than even the breach in ecclesiastical unity effected by the Reformation, itself a decisively contributing factor to the weakening of the prophetic witness of religion, was the tacit surrender of the world to those self-constituted forces and principles the basic assumption of which was an ultimate reliance on unredeemed human nature and human capacity for all the needs of life.

And if that surrender, as we have seen, first took effect in the political realm, in concession to the imperative demands of the nation State for untrammelled autonomy, even more

potent than the political factor as a force setting its stamp on the modern age was the revolution in the economic sphere by which that age has been marked. It initiated an unlimited expansion in competitive trade and commerce, a field of enterprise which the new men of the time were only too eager to enter and exploit. We called attention in the last Lecture to the emergence into a dominating position, in the period marked by the break-up of European unity, of the members of the commercial entrepreneur class, bent on seizing, at whatever cost to the traditional structure of society, the opportunities for wealth which an expanding world of thought and geographical discovery offered: an absorbing pursuit, for which a needed religious sanction was found in that conception of God and of the standing of the individual with God which, deriving from Calvinism, raised economic enterprise to the level of a divine vocation, and which through the Puritan movement provided, in its earlier stages, the informing spirit of "the Liberal society"¹ in both England and the whole Western World.

Meanwhile, if Calvin provided a religious justification for the competitive individualism of commercial enterprise, it was another Frenchman, Descartes, a century later who, with a logic equally relentless, prepared the ground in the realm of pure thought for the advent of the machine age. Here, indeed, in the Cartesian conception of reality, was, as the late Dr. Temple pointed out,² the most significant turning-point in the transition from the old to the new in the history of European thought, and indirectly at least of European society. It was a revolution which involved the complete jettisoning of the theologically determined approach to the world, and not only the singling out of the self as

¹ Cf. Hughes, *The Church and the Liberal Society*.

² *Nature, Man and God*, pp. 57 ff.

the first principle of a wholly new world view but of abstract thought, thought in detachment from things, as providing the one way to assured knowledge. To the Cartesian, looking out on the world which was seen increasingly to answer to standards of mathematical measurement, nature appeared as a self-enclosed, self-complete system governed throughout by ascertainable laws in which, if room must still be found for God, it was in no other sense than as the divine guarantee of a desiccated and abstract mathematical structure.

And inevitably that "closed mechanical order governed by mathematical laws,"¹ with which the world of Cartesian philosophy was identified, was carried far beyond its acceptance as a metaphysical postulate into the practice of a whole age, an age of which the governing characteristic was, as it still remains, the dominance of mechanical science and its proved mastery in subduing the world of nature to the service of man. Indeed, so astonishing in rapidity and extent was the unbroken advance made in the technical conquest and exploitation of the physical world that it seemed, as it still seems, to provide a solution of all the pressing problems of life, to open the door to a progress to which no limit could be set, and to provide, in place of the old, a new basis of European and, indeed, of world unity.

But if France provided the original philosophical basis of this mechanistic conception of the world, constituting "an entirely new mental frame of reference for that which Christianity had provided for the European mind during the previous fifteen hundred years,"² it was this country which led the way in translating it into terms of political science, and in giving it concrete expression in a revolutionized social order. That new order, based on the factory, and revolu-

¹ Dawson, *Progress and Religion*, p. 185.

² Baillie, *What is Civilization?*, p. 26.

tionary in the extent to which it broke into the traditional rhythms of human life, was constituted in practice by the application of machinery to production and transport, by invention after invention facilitating output on an ever greater and more rapid scale, and issuing in a new standard of wealth for the entrepreneur himself and for the country within which he carried on his enterprise. Moreover, in characteristically English fashion the practical demands of the new industrial system were first met, the demand not least of an inexhaustible supply of docile labour; and only then was theoretical justification sought and found for the glaring inequalities of the new order in the inescapable laws of political economy. Axiomatic to the principles of the new science, as laid down by its leading exponents, Adam Smith and Ricardo, was a conception of man, as essentially a creature of economic appetites, thrown into a merciless competitive world, in which by the unrestricted pursuit of his own interest the isolated individual, and particularly the worker and wage earner, would by a necessity grounded in the very nature of things find his own level, use or fail to use his opportunities, rise or sink in the fierce contest, of which the weapons were those of supply and demand. Thus as the typical unit of Western industrialized society there emerged the economic man, uprooted from any natural basis of community, subject to an iron law of wages which reduced his standard of living to the barest subsistence level, for whom religion, however far it might speak to the condition of his soul, had no word of social liberation, and for whom the State stood only as a coercive force assuring a specious freedom of contract, and unfettered scope for the working out of the inexorable laws of nature.

Here both in practice and doctrine was a regime which, however hardly it bore on the men, women and children sub-

jected to it, seemed to provide the assurance of a new and brilliant epoch of civilization. The future of man seemed to be bound up with the absorbing task of carrying ever further the proved triumph of the machine, that world of nature within which he was set, and of which he himself formed an element, being given not to be reverenced, understood and obeyed, but to be drained and exploited for the materials and forces latent within it, materials and forces to be harnessed to the supreme end of producing marketable goods for sale wherever the highest profits could be made. In the unlimited field open to mechanical progress there was displayed the promise of a new world unified by the extension of the kingdom of science to all the departments of human life, a dazzling prospect of achievement in and over the material realm by which man, and more particularly Western man, would achieve his destined mastery over the earth subdued to his possession and use, and in the process would himself grow to his full moral stature.

Nor has this belief in applied science, as the key to the fulfilment of man's earthly destiny, been confined to the Western world in which it took its origin. The East has been caught by the same vision, allowed it to invade and disrupt its own traditional order of life, laid hold upon it and applied it as the one weapon by the use of which it can dispute and meet on its own level the mastery of the West. The coming to the East of the machine, and of applied science with its proved capacity to furnish the means of a higher standard of life, brought in its train a "spiritual revolution,"¹ and has made "the problem of secularism as burning in the East as in the West."² There, whether in the more advanced or more primitive societies, the moral and social framework of life has from time immemorial been compacted together by the

¹ Freytag, *Spiritual Revolution in the East*.

² Kraemer, op. cit., p. 22.

cement of religion, and inevitably disintegrates when this is removed.

Yet it is precisely this traditional religious basis of the social structure which has proved unable either to absorb or to resist the shock of Western thought and Western science. And hence the fateful dilemma of the East. It is faced with the choice between, on the one hand, the attempted retention of the ancient religious culture with the exclusion of all those forces which go to make up the modern world and, on the other hand, a yielding to and adoption of Western thought and science at the cost of all which has hitherto given value and significance to life. And in spite of resistance in older conservative circles, a religion identified with "the ancient bondage"¹ inevitably loses its hold with the growing number of those eager to borrow the weapons of the West in order to compete on equal terms with the West.

In the East, Near, Middle and Far, as we have seen already in the case of Europe, the cult of nationalism has proved a potent force in the dissolution of a religiously based civilization. In Islamic Turkey, as also in Hindu India, the political factor has become dominant, and threatens to usurp the place once occupied by religion. Above all, Japan set itself deliberately to absorb and master the mechanical science of the West for nationalistic ends, while providing in Shinto and the deification of the Emperor a pseudo-religious sanction for an aggressive imperialism.

Moreover, it has been especially the Universities and the student circles of the East which have been intoxicated with the heady wine of Western science. For them, and for the intelligentsia of their countries, religion in its inherited forms has seemed a main obstacle to the new scientifically planned

¹ W. Paton, "What is Secularism?", *International Review of Missions*, July, 1929.

order on which their ambitions are set. Thus they find themselves uneasily balanced between two unreconciled worlds. The unified order of life cemented by religion, as they inherited it, has broken up: and though they may still fall back on the traditional cult in times of crisis, the beliefs and practices of religion are increasingly thrust into the background as irrelevant to the real interests and demand of life, giving place to a secularism purporting to make complete and adequate provision for all human needs.

Life for them has become departmentalized. "For the Eastern man the religious and the secular spheres of life have fallen apart, his life has lost the sustaining unity, which gives it meaning."¹ He has become "a man without a country,"² for whom religion in its inherited form can no longer fulfil its proper task of interpreting and unifying human life. Not only so, but with the invasion of the East by mass-production industry, a process of individualization has set in menacing the traditional forms of community and breaking into the organic order of society. It is not, of course, the case that the traditional religiously based cultures of the East do not still carry immense weight and provide a spiritual home for multitudes. Even so it would seem, so deeply has the impact of the West penetrated, that no attempted retention or revival of the ancient ways can meet the spiritual crisis with which the East is faced. Indeed, it would appear that the spiritual destiny of the East lies, not, as ordinarily conceived in missionary terms, between the traditional religion and Christianity, but between a thorough-going secularism, reproducing in Asia the devastating effects already manifested in Europe, and Christianity; a Christianity, however, adequate to its inherent task, as imperative in the East as in the West, of resolving the tension between the secular and

¹ Freytag, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

² *Ib.*, p. 179.

the sacred in a synthesis which gives scope for the positive achievements of man's creative capacity, not, however, as self-complete in their own right, but as subordinate to and deriving their value from that conception of human nature and destiny of which the Incarnation is the supreme and final sanction.

Meanwhile, the truth that the crisis of our time is a spiritual one, and can only be resolved in spiritual terms, ultimately, indeed, in terms of the revelation of God given once for all in Christ, has hardly yet begun to win acceptance. Only slowly and reluctantly, and in the light of events printed on the darkest page of human history, has the fallacious character of this optimistic belief in technics, and in the material progress of which mechanical science provides the key, as the assurance of peace and felicity for the human family, been forced on the attention of mankind. Hardly yet, indeed, or only now, with the subduing of atomic energy to the service of man, have the full implications come home to him of the truth that the technical mastery of the resources of the physical world is a double-edged weapon, capable, indeed, if used with due regard for those unalterable laws which are written both on the starry heavens and in the heart of man, of lifting from men's shoulders the undue burdens of want and hardship, of ameliorating their earthly lot and transforming for good the outward conditions of life, but capable also of subserving the ends of destruction physical and moral, of a complete distortion of the basic conditions of an organic order of human life and society, when misused by those who have seized the reins of power in the modern State and are prepared to exercise it without ruth or scruple for their own self-chosen ends.

And if this be so, it is clear that the prospect of right order in our own age, of such a reshaping of the social and political

structure as to provide the conditions of a habitable world, not for Europe only but for the whole family of man, the fateful interdependence of which has itself been brought home by this same technical progress and the breaking down of all barriers of distance and isolation which it has effected, depends not on the rejection of the machine, not even on the slowing down of the pace of technical advance, but on the subjection of this titanic force to ends compatible with a true conception of man and of human welfare. In other words the remedy for the disorder of our time lies not in the vain effort of an attempted return to a pre-mechanistic way of life, but in a clear recognition of the nature and limitations of technical achievement, a recognition that "science provides not a moral dynamic but an intellectual technique,"¹ which needs to draw from a transcendent source, recognized as finally authoritative, for that moral direction, that law both natural and divine, for lack of which, and as a result of the rejection of which, it has proved capable of conversion into a demonic force, destructive not only of the outward achievements of a civilized order, but of the moral and cultural values which can alone assure its stability.

For meanwhile the truth has been ignored that every advance made (and such advances have in our own time followed each other with bewildering rapidity) in the mastery of the external world constitutes a fresh demand on the capacity of man for moral self-mastery and for resisting the temptation of the misuse of power. All too unthinkingly has it been assumed that the humanizing of man's basic passions would itself keep pace with, or follow from, his achievements in the physical realm. And all too generally has the comfortable tendency prevailed "to think of moral progress as the

¹ Dawson, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

automatic effect of many inventions.”¹ Here can be detected the fundamental fallacy of which the facile acceptance has blinded modern man to a true sense of the tragic outcome of his grand endeavour. Dazzled by his triumphs in the material realm, all too readily has he left the inner realm of the spirit a prey to the latent forces of moral anarchy and of his own unregenerate nature. Not only has he been wilfully blind to the conditions on which alone a new and higher level in the realm of the spirit could be attained as the counterpart to his achievement in dominating and transforming his physical environment: he has rather yielded than gained ground in the realm of the spirit through his all-but-complete loss of hold on that supernatural order, that kingdom and will of God, through subjection to which he can alone be redeemed from himself, and delivered from the bondage of that “mystery of lawlessness”² which has been left to work unchecked, and to leaven the whole lump from the inner citadel of the soul to the circumference of his life. Assuming all too credulously that technics is itself the assurance of human well-being, he has forgotten that his primary need is that of deliverance from his own sin-infected disordered nature, a deliverance which can only be effected by the act of the Stronger entering in to bind and exorcize the rebellious passions of his unregenerate self, and on the basis of that deliverance to open his eyes to his true supertemporal end, and the one condition of attaining it.

Nor is it only a failure to recognize that it is in the realm of the spirit that there lie for good or for evil the ultimate issues of human life and destiny, which has marked the advent of the machine age, and of the conception of the world in mechanistic terms. The latter has also made destructive

¹ Algernon Cecil, *A House in Bryanston Square*, p. 347.

² 2 Thess. ii, 7.

inroads on the natural organically-constituted order of human life, uprooting the masses subjected to it from their community groupings, local and of the soil, which form the basis of a healthy society. The individual wage hand, swept into the mass-production factory, engaged in the monotonous tending of the machine during the working hours of each day, is under constant pressure himself to be depersonalized, the living counterpart of the routine of toil which the machine demands. The unceasing impact of the mould by which his daily life is shaped tends to deprive him of any sense of belonging, of roots either in the world above or in that around him.

Moreover, the sense of loneliness, of lack of a place and a function in an organic order of life, has been both exemplified and emphasized by those theories of man and of human nature which have emerged in their turn as the answer in rationalized terms to the trend of events. Man as constituted by his rational faculty as the very ground of his being, man as a creature of warring passions striving for mastery over his fellows and finding security and escape from his fears only by submission to the great Leviathan, man again as a creature good and holy, only needing to be liberated from the fetters riveted on him by the vested interests of the existing religious and political powers, bourgeois man again with his intense individualism, and his insistence on self-interest in the economic sphere as the elemental motive unlimited obedience to which would result in the general welfare, man yet again as constituted by the will to power and to domination of his fellows, these have in turn represented thrustings out into sole prominence of factors, or supposed factors, in human nature, to which sometimes a priori doctrinaire considerations, sometimes the climate and spirit of the age, have attached exclusive emphasis, as constituting each in turn

that element in which the essential nature of man was to be found.

They are alike in this, that they atomize life, isolating the individual from his fellows, isolating one faculty of his being at the expense of the rest and of the whole, cutting him adrift from nature, treating him in abstraction and making of him as so conceived the basic unit on which a whole world-view and a whole order of life are constructed. They are alike in this, too, that they disown or ignore as irrelevant any kinship of man with a kingdom unseen and eternal, or the fact that his citizenship in that kingdom is the one assurance of his liberty, the one ground too on which a fully integrated personality can rest. And the outcome of this atomizing process in its impact on the nature and life of man tends to be his reduction to an impersonal unit in the multitude without roots or security of tenure, or stake in life, seeking escape from his sense of impotence and homelessness in some vast mass or collective organized for a common end, the ready prey too of any self-constituted saviour of society promising "food and order" at the price of subjection to his leadership.

It is, then, the loss precisely of that which counts as of supreme value in the nature of man, his personal dignity and freedom, which is threatened by what we have called the rising tide of secularism. For what is common to those characteristic organized forms which secularism, in the sense in which we have defined the term, has taken, has been not only the exclusion of any recognition of a divine kingdom and righteousness as the given pattern in the ordering of human affairs, but also and equally the denial of man and of the fundamental demands of human nature. The very claim and attempt to organize human society on the assumption that the nature and destiny of man find their final satisfaction and fulfilment within the temporal order has been shown

to result in the reduction of the individual, as the subject of this attempt, to a cipher in an indistinguishable multitude, the prey of impersonal forces which he can neither understand nor control. In the degree to which, in sole reliance on the mastery of natural resources, and the power of dominating his natural surroundings, which the progress of technical science has placed in his hands, modern man has sought to shape the world to ends dictated solely by his own self-chosen interests and ambitions, and in disregard of any transcendent realm under which he stands, of any law of ultimate and universal validity to which his primary allegiance is due, he has ignored that by which alone his essential liberty is safeguarded, his personal worth is vindicated, his very nature is fulfilled. And there is more than a touch of tragic irony in the fact that a humanism which has exalted the capacity of man to provide for all his needs, and to build for himself from materials at his disposal the kingdom of his desire, and in doing so has ruled out as irrelevant any reference to the ultimate sanctions for which religion stands, has borne fruit in a depersonalized humanity, and the forfeiture of that very sense of personal worth by which it sets supreme store.

The review of the modern epoch which we have attempted has brought this paradox home with telling force. It has found, as we have seen, its most conspicuous and glaring exemplification in that framework of ordered social life, typical of our age, which is constituted by the nation State: and more particularly, though not exclusively, as the nation State has emerged in its totalitarian forms in the present phase of history. Recognizing no principles of universal validity as binding in the sphere of policy, and constituting itself for those within it the object of unquestioning and unqualified devotion, the State as so organized is led inevit-

ably to deny not only the rights of other peoples in so far as they clash with its own interest, but also the fundamental rights and liberties of its own citizens. It demands and exacts as the price of the revolution which it sets itself to effect the reduction of society to an amorphous, inorganic mass, the individual units of which form the plastic material both in thought and action of the dominant party.

Nor has this dehumanizing outcome of a secularist outlook and practice been confined to the political field of the nation State. It has been characteristic also of the highly-organized industrial society of the West, of that revolution in the sphere of industrial production rendered possible by the machine, and which as it gathered strength and momentum transformed, to take the first and most outstanding example, the face of this country and the traditional structure of English life. Based as it was on the avowed principle of competitive individualism, and exalting as it did the economic motive into sole predominance, the Industrial Revolution which imparted a new form and direction to Western society was carried through with scant regard for personal values: nor is it safe to assume that the swing from an extreme individualism to a regime of centralized social and economic planning will fundamentally modify, it may even in some respects accentuate, a disregard for those values of the person and the community, the safeguarding of which must be the first concern of a Christian order of society.

For what has stood out as the typical figure of the industrial age and of the civilization of our time has been, and to a large extent still is, the individual wage hand, serving an instrumental purpose, compelled by economic pressure to the acceptance of conditions of life and work which may be a standing denial of human dignity, and with little or no voice in the shaping or reshaping of those conditions: for

whom, too, religion has been presented not as a solvent of social and economic servitude, but either as itself providing an additional buttress of the forces of exploitation, or at best an inner realm of the soul in which he can find spiritual refuge from the impact of those forces. And hence a primary condition of a return to right order in our time is the rehabilitation of man, his restoration to his rightful place in the world of God's creation and purpose, and such a transformation of the basic conditions of his life as shall enable him to find in them not a denial but a reflection, on their own level, of his status as a son in his Father's house.

SUPPLEMENT

SECULAR AND SACRED IN SOVIET RUSSIA

No treatment of the forces of Secularism in the modern age can be regarded as adequate which omits any attempt to assess, within the terms of reference for which these Lectures stand, the greatest and most far-reaching social experiment of this, or perhaps of any, era, represented by the emergence and establishment of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The outcome of revolution, and of revolution effected and carried through by ruthless methods of violence, here is a social and political regime which claims to embody "a radical break in the history of mankind."¹ It embraces within its scope a sixth of the area of the world and a great variety of peoples organized on a basis of complete racial equality. And to all appearance it is not destined, as has proved to be the case with National Socialism in Germany, and its precursor Italian Fascism, to be overthrown either from within or from without. It is a regime which may undergo, and indeed has undergone, modifications in the light of experience. Yet in essentials it has come to stay, and must be reckoned with, both within its own vast orbit and as a widespread and potent influence without, in any estimate of the relatively permanent lines along which human society in the coming age is to take shape.

There can, indeed, be no question that the effective advance of Russia from the background to the foreground of European affairs, accelerated by her achievements in the late war, is an event of immense importance in its bearing on

¹ Quoted : Carr, *The Soviet Impact on the Western World*, p. 99.

the nature and quality of European and, indeed, of world civilization. In no sense can she, or will she, be segregated and cordoned off, culturally or otherwise, within the vast area which she immediately controls. She has reversed the traditional course of events, and instead of being invaded from Europe she has herself invaded Europe, and brought with her the philosophy of life, and its social expression, of which she is the bearer. Yet equally can there be no question that that philosophy of life is alien from, and, indeed, diametrically opposed to, the tradition in which Europe grew to maturity. Russia is within Europe, yet remains not of Europe. She does not share the European mind, and shows no signs of a readiness to come to terms with the traditional assumptions on which Western civilization has been based. Indeed, she rejects those assumptions outright, and believes in herself, with entire conviction, as the destined herald and example of a philosophy of life more true to the nature of things, and a way of life more complete and satisfying than any which rests on them.

Hers too is no "Revolution of Nihilism," regardless and destructive of all moral standards. Rightly or wrongly she holds that, both in theory and practice, she represents certain fundamental human rights which have received scant regard, if, indeed, they have not been repudiated outright, in the West. And however far she may have misjudged the West from this very standpoint, it is not to be too hastily assumed that she has not a contribution of positive and constructive value to make to the civilization of the future by her establishment of a social order which is a standing and deliberate contradiction of that traditional in the Western world. Certainly that criticism and condemnation of Western standards for which the Soviet system stands must not go unheeded and unexamined: and if there is no problem in the

political sphere more urgent, if also more difficult of solution, than that of a common understanding between the Western powers and Russia, there is an equally urgent demand for enquiry into the deeper question of the nature of the contribution which Russia may be expected to make to the coming European and world order, and what the bearing of that contribution is likely to be on the "prospect for Christendom."

Nor must there be too hasty a begging of the question so raised. For however far in its professed philosophy of life, and in its social structure, the U.S.S.R. stands for an avowed rejection of the affirmations of religion, and more particularly of the Christian interpretation of human nature and destiny, that rejection need not in itself exclude the positive assertion, even if within a non-Christian and, indeed, anti-Christian context, of certain fundamental values which demand recognition and expression as the presupposition of a fully integrated Christian order of society. Our contention throughout has, indeed, been that for the purpose of such an order something more and something better is called for than can be provided on the secular and natural level alone, and that the very values, if such there be, so asserted can only be safeguarded from debasement and corruption, and carried to fulfilment, if they rest on sanctions derived not from the doctrinal requirements of a secular social philosophy, and still less from the exigencies of power politics, but from regard, whether explicitly acknowledged or not, for a standard transcendent and ultimate, given and revealed of God. If Soviet Russia, then, has, from our standpoint, a positive contribution to make in the shaping of things to come, any such prospect must depend, on the one hand, on the validity of her claim to have established a social order, however far based on exclusively secular assumptions, which yet provide scope for fundamental human rights suppressed

or ignored elsewhere, and on the other hand on the degree to which the values of humanity so asserted find in the sacred, however mediated, a higher sanction than any which can be provided on their own secular level.

To all appearances, indeed, the prospect of the effective assertion of any such higher sanction is ruled out by the first principles of Soviet doctrine. On its own showing Soviet Russia acclaims itself as the most outstanding, and the most successful, example of uncompromising secularism which history has witnessed. From the first this great social experiment has been avowedly based on the Marxian assumption of a doctrine of man as both creature and creator of the historical process, within which and in the service of which his life's purpose is fulfilled. It professes to give concrete shape on a vast scale to the autonomy of the secular in unqualified form, and indeed to inaugurate a new age and "a new civilization"¹ rooted in this presupposition. It thus rules out from the first from its pattern of life any recognition of, or regard for, the sacred, as a realm above any of man's choosing or making, to which his ultimate allegiance is due. It claims that, with modern technical science as its major instrument, a classless order of society can and, indeed, inevitably will be established, within which, with his economic freedom secured and his economic needs met, man can both prove to be the bearer of history to its destined issue and find complete personal satisfaction for all his essential demands, to the entire exclusion of any realm or law, transcendent and eternal, above and beyond it.

And it was as the logical outcome of this fundamental assumption of the sole reality of the secular, in accordance with which the Soviet social order was established and has been maintained, that its attitude to religion and the Church

¹ Cf. Webb, *Soviet Communism*, pp. 1119 ff.

was determined. Nor, of course, was that attitude adopted from doctrinal considerations only. There was the added spur to an anti-religious policy in the fact that the makers of the Revolution saw in the Orthodox Church, its hierarchy and its priesthood, a counter-revolutionary force closely identified with a discarded and discredited regime. Hence the systematic persecution to which the Church was subjected, its places of worship secularized, its seminaries closed, its leaders imprisoned, exiled or killed. Such suppression, however, struck only at the external fabric of religion and much more than this was demanded by the exigencies of the Revolution. The attack must be carried from the outward to the inward sphere, and the attempt made on a wholesale scale to eradicate belief in a transcendent spiritual order from the mind of a whole people. For the regime saw in religion itself, apart from its expression in traditional Orthodoxy, a "prejudice and superstition"¹ which blinded those captivated by it to the new gospel of dialectical materialism which it proclaimed.

"Religion in Russia had always been of an extreme other-worldly type, and as such found its inspiration in the monasteries, and the standard of holiness there respected, rather than in the town and country Churches and the secular clergy."² As such, however, religion was lacking in social content and significance. It was rooted in world-renunciation, and it made no claim to provide a solvent of conditions in the everyday world of sinning, striving, suffering humanity. It possessed and proclaimed no message of liberation from social injustice and oppression. It left the secular realm on one side, and concerned itself exclusively with the sacred and the transcendent, and with the life lived, and the

¹ Cf. Anderson, *People, Church and State in Modern Russia*, p. 104.

² Cf. Danzas, *The Russian Church*, p. 6.

character formed, by entire subjection to it. It was thus inevitable that viewed as a power distracting from the real issues of life, and running counter to that radical transformation of the social order on which the regime of the Revolution was embarked, religion should also be attacked in its inner citadel. Hence the widespread destruction of the monasteries, and the grand attempt through all the agencies of propaganda, education and intimidation to banish regard for the supernatural from the mind particularly of the younger generation.

It is true that in the light of experience this declared anti-religious policy has more recently been modified. The discovery has been made that in the sphere of religion, as in other departments, there remains a traditional Russia which cannot be disregarded and to which concessions must be made: and in deference to this ineradicable strand of religion in the Russian soul a measure of liberty has been granted to the Church for the re-establishment of its hierarchy, and the use of churches for public worship. At the same time the concession so made to the religious institution cannot be regarded as indicating any change in the official philosophy of the ruling party, or any modification of its undiluted secularism of outlook and policy. And however far this measure of liberty has been welcomed by the Church, and even proclaimed as adequate for the fulfilment of its purpose, it is bought at the price of the acceptance of the Soviet order as it stands, and of abstention from any prophetic criticism, from the Christian standpoint, of the regime as a whole or of any particular feature of it.

That regime is professedly based on the Marxian thesis that it is economic conditions, and more particularly "methods of production," which are the ruling and qualifying factor in any social order or any epoch of history. For it the

unit of society is still, as in the early capitalistic era, economic man, only now finding his own level and his proper function no longer as the result of a competitive struggle with his fellows on an individualistic basis, but as he lives and moves and has his being in a wholly socialized community. Inevitably, then, the Soviet regime sets primary store by its claims and its achievements in the economic sphere. And, indeed, it is as inaugurating a new epoch of liberation from economic bondage that it prides itself upon the Revolution. To use Stalin's own words, the Revolution "sets as its goal not the replacement of one form of exploitation by another form of exploitation, of one group of exploiters by another group of exploiters, but the annihilation of every form of exploitation of man by man."¹

Moreover it would be claimed, in view of the fundamental character of the economic factor in the shaping of human life, that emancipation in this realm carries with it the breath of a new-found freedom into other spheres of thought and action. Nor, indeed, can it be denied that, within the steel framework of the new order established by the Revolution, there has resulted for the millions of Russia the consciousness of a great liberation and of a great expansion of life. Throughout the vast area embraced within the Soviet system there is no discrimination on personal, social or racial grounds. Within the framework of the common order there is equality of status and opportunity for all. It is true that that order is one for which there is no place for the individual except as submerged within the great organized collective, with his own part to play in carrying the mighty historical process to its inevitable and predestined outcome. And for those who accept the Marxian myth in its entirety and its concrete embodiment in the Soviet order, there may well be

¹ Quoted : Carr, op. cit., p. 99.

found a great incentive to life in the exhilarating conviction of being agents in the fulfilment of the Messianic hope of an earthly millennium. But the corollary is equally obvious, and for those who stand aside from or resist that stream of historical tendency there is nothing for it but to be swept mercilessly from the common path. There is no middle course between total acceptance and liquidation.

If, then, there is a measure of justification for Berdyaev's contention that "the historic destiny of the Russian people is to create a social order more just and more humane than that of the West,"¹ the question to which, in terms of our thesis, a tentative answer must be sought is whether, and by what means, these values of justice and humanity which, it is claimed, find embodiment in the Soviet social order can be preserved and made good under the dead weight of the great machine of State. And more particularly it is the question whether the standing of the person, and his worth as an end in himself, can be secured over against not only an authoritarian government but the constant pressure of a wholly socialized order. Fundamentally, indeed, it is the same question as is equally urgent in the West, that of the liberty of the person within and over against a planned State-controlled order of society, such an order as appears to be demanded under the conditions of a mass civilization; the question which the late Dr. Mannheim posed so sharply, analysed so fully, and to which he suggested tentative lines along which the solution must be looked for.² It is, indeed, Stalin's contention that "a socialist society alone presents a solid guarantee for the protection of the interests of the individual."³

¹ Berdyaev, "La Personne et l'Esprit Communautaire dans la Conscience Russe," in *Cahiers de la Nouvelle Epoque*.

² Cf. *Man and Society; Diagnosis of Our Time*.

³ Quoted : Carr, op. cit., p. 104.

Yet, however high the authority for it, such a bare dogmatic assertion is unsatisfying: and if the main contention of these Lectures is sound, the only adequate answer to this question, so acute in our age, is that which St. Augustine gave in face of the convulsions of his age, the answer that man possesses a heavenly citizenship over against the earthly, that, however far he owes obedience to the temporal authority, his ultimate allegiance belongs to a realm of God above and beyond it, that he derives his very being not from beneath only, but from above, that his end is eternal life transcending and beyond the sphere of history, and that in Christ Jesus he has an indefeasible status as a child of God of which nothing earthly can deprive him.

This ultimate conviction of man's spiritual status as a child of God has survived—much more cannot be said—in the West. It was, indeed, suppressed under the totalitarian tyranny of the Nazi regime: and in many quarters, where there is no question of direct State pressure, it is a conviction which has grown dangerously faint and weak. Yet it lives on as the priceless heritage of our Christian tradition, and may yet be re-established in strength both in this country and, perhaps, in Europe. And so far as this is so it furnishes some assurance that, however far the demands of State organization and planning go, the fundamental liberties of the person are still secure. In Soviet Russia it is different. For, as we have seen, the whole order rests on the explicit denial of any such status, on the complete repudiation of any allegiance beyond that which the collective and the historical process of which it is the chosen instrument can claim. Berdyaev has maintained that there has always existed in the Russian character a strong vein of genuine humanism, illustrated not least in a succession of Russian writers of the nineteenth century, a tradition of the value of the individual in and for

himself, and not merely as instrumental to ends beyond himself or a future which he will not see. And he claims to see signs of a "revival of this humanist tendency in the Russia of to-day."¹ Yet, as Berdyaev would be the first to acknowledge, that tradition cannot be maintained in its own strength. It needs a spiritual basis and guarantee, and to be grounded in a realm above and beyond that of man himself, if it is to be vindicated and secured in face of the forces adverse to its maintenance.

And it is only religion which can furnish such a guarantee. Indeed, Berdyaev himself acknowledges that "only a Christian Renaissance combining the principle of the person with the community is capable of assuring victory over the depersonalization and the dehumanization which threatens the world."² For Soviet Russia in particular it is the question whether there survive in sufficient strength the forces of the spirit to vivify and transform from within the secular order, and redeem it from proving a soulless machine deadening to the very life and culture of man. Here the Church, if tolerated, is not accepted, and still less accorded any constructive part in the shaping of human life and society. Even so, with its splendid Byzantine Liturgy as its central expression, the Church can do much to keep alive the reality of religion in the soul of the people: while beyond the limits of institutional orthodoxy there remains the strain of mystical other-worldly piety which from the first has been characteristic of Russian religion. And the hope of the assertion of the sacred in and over the secular in this great field lies not in the survival only of this religious tradition, corporate and personal, but in its power to transfigure from within the social order and to leaven it with the spirit of Christ. Whether such a resurgence of the Christian spirit, such a

¹ Berdyaev, op. cit.

² *Ib.*

Christian Renaissance, can and will take effect it is impossible to say. What can be said is that, failing such a reassertion in effective power of the religious tradition, the Soviet order bids fair not only to extinguish within the vast area of its immediate control those very values of humanity which it claims to vindicate, but wherever its influence, direct or indirect, is carried beyond the limits of its own wide orbit, to strike at the very foundations on which alone a Christian order of society can be built in the Europe and the world of our time.

VII

THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD

THE last lecture covered an epoch of modern history of which it was maintained that secularism has been, in prevailing and increasing measure, a characteristic feature. It was thus concerned with the secular not as an integral element in an order of life unified and brought to fulfilment by the acknowledged supremacy of the sacred, but with the secular as claiming to provide a self-complete and self-sufficient frame of life, to the exclusion of the sacred in its relevance at least to the wider fields of organized activity. For such was the meaning which we attached to the term secularism as the hall-mark of the modern age and some of the fruits of which in history and human life we traced. And we have now to concentrate on the sacred, and more particularly as the sacred finds embodiment in the Church, and to call attention to the rôle which the Church has filled, or failed to fill, and is called to fill, in the establishment and maintenance of a Christian order of society.

The constitutive basis of such an order is, indeed, to be found in the acceptance and application of the Word and Will of Christ, to the degree to which, and in the modes in which, such application is realizable, on the various levels and in the various departments, wider and narrower, of life. By the realm of God, the divine commonwealth, as embodied in earthly and temporal conditions, we can mean nothing else, and nothing less, than human life at all levels and in all departments brought wholly under the acknowledged sovereignty of God and His revealed Will. But for the estab-

lishment of such a standard in concrete terms we cannot look to the forces latent and energizing within the secular order. Indeed, it is those very forces which form the raw material of the redeeming and transforming power of the spirit of Christ, and which, unless so redeemed and transformed, may well work for havoc and not for renewal in the body politic.

But neither is such an order possible of achievement, and still less of maintenance, by dint alone of a diffused Christianity penetrating and colouring human society. For a Christianity so diffused, and without focus in concrete, corporate visible form, will be at the mercy of other and alien forces in the moral and spiritual sphere, and will be subject to perversion or fade into ineffectiveness. It will have no power of resistance to the forces of corruption latent and potent in human nature, and at times emerging into prominence and seizing the helm of the barque in which mankind is borne along the stream of history. It can only fulfil its leavening, redeeming, vivifying work as it possesses a focal centre, from which it constantly draws replenishment and renewal, in a society called out from society as a whole both to exemplify in its own fellowship, and to be the trustee and guardian for the world of men of, those values which are, on the assumption of a Christian order of society, to be acknowledged and implemented throughout the whole range of human life. It is, then, the peculiar and essential mission of the Church, as the organized community of believing, worshiping, witnessing Christians, in the world and sharing to the full the conditions of the world, yet also called out and separated from the world, to hold in trust and render available that "power of God unto salvation,"¹ which is to be effectual not only "to everyone that believeth,"¹ but for the redemption of society as a whole. The secular order, the

¹ Rom. i, 16.

seething world which is the expression and outcome of the hopes and aspirations, the passions and desires, the endeavours and achievements of men, can only be brought under law to Christ as the acceptance of that dominion finds intensive expression not only in individual lives but in the corporate life of the divine society.

Such, indeed, is our belief, and such our claim. Yet it must be frankly acknowledged that the acceptance of such a claim, the claim that the Church is a factor to be taken into consideration in the establishment of right order in the world of to-day, even if by right order is meant a Christian order, can by no means be taken for granted. Even among those who uphold the validity of Christian values as authoritative for human life there are many who would question the necessity for the institutional Church as guardian and guarantee of those values. They would, of course, allow, as a matter of history, that the medieval period was one in which the Church was not merely a community within society as a whole: it was co-extensive with society. It not only made its specific contribution to the civilization of the age. It very largely constituted that civilization both on its outward institutional law-established side, and also in its culture and the regulative principles accepted as authoritative in the various departments. Indeed, so deeply rooted was the prestige of the Church, as a governing factor in the ordering of human life, that it long outlived the break-up of Western Christendom. Well into the modern age, even in its fragmented and sectional form, the Church was still looked to as the exponent of the view of life taken for granted by the vast majority in the Western world, and of the recognized order of ethical and cultural values.

But this, it would be maintained, is no longer so. Nor need, nor can, the Church now be taken into serious account as a

fundamental factor in the shaping of the organized pattern of life. It represents a standpoint in doctrine, and even in ethics, which belongs to a discarded past. It lies in a back-water, away from the main stream of life and interest. There is no need, indeed, to suppress or penalize it: for it is not even a counter-revolutionary force. Its continuance can be tolerated, and even welcomed, as a picturesque survival of an ancient tradition, as a fragment of past history projected into the present, or as a department of life organized on a voluntary basis for the practice of religion. But for the practical purposes of life, as an institution of vital importance to the welfare of mankind, as having any contribution of its own to make to the history now taking shape, it can safely be ignored.

Such, it will be recognized, is an assumption, tacit or expressed, held in many quarters to-day, an assumption not perhaps without its element of justification. For, indeed, it must be acknowledged that the Church has for long been a diminishing factor in the control of the direction taken by the great movements of human life. We have seen that the ecclesiastical sectionalism characteristic of recent centuries has tended to force the Churches back on to themselves and the jealous guardianship of their respective doctrinal and other standards, leaving the world of secular interests outside the sphere with which the Church and religion as such were concerned.

There are signs, however, that in this respect the tide has turned. The dark page of history just closed, and particularly the rise of the omnicompetent State and its organized and deliberate effort to set its uniform stamp on the whole of life, in the inner as well as the outward sphere, has revealed the Church in a new light as the embodiment of that which totalitarian nihilism is most concerned to destroy. It has been shown with startling clearness that at times when a

concerted attack is made on the fundamental values of life and humanity, the traditions which form the groundwork of the structure of a civilized order, the personal freedom and dignity of the individual, and his inexpugnable right to be treated as an end in himself and not as a mere instrument of State, the claim to a relative autonomy on the part of voluntary associations, and above all the integrity of the family, it is the Church which spontaneously stands out as guardian of the spiritual treasures by which man lives, the Church which is looked to, and not in vain, not merely to vindicate its own spiritual independence, but in the very act of doing so to save the soul of the people from which it draws its members.”¹ The evidence which has reached us of the part played by the Churches, both leaders and rank-and-file members, in the occupied countries of Europe during the recent war, Norway, Holland and France, and, indeed, in Germany itself, goes to show that when a time of crisis arises in which the ultimate liberties of man are the issue in question, it is the Church which, at whatever cost, proves itself the natural guardian and trustee of those liberties.

Indeed, at such times of supreme challenge not only does the Church stand out in a new light before the world of men. It discovers or rediscovers itself. It awakens anew to its own nature and its peculiar mission. It gains a new apprehension of the Gospel entrusted to it. In the spirit of its Lord it learns no longer to live to itself. Rather it learns to die to itself, that in the power of the Resurrection of which it is the appointed witness it may act as a redeeming and transforming force in the life of the world around it, a beacon of hope to the despairing, a city set on a hill within which the forces of the spirit hold out.

¹ Cf. H. P. Van Dusen, *What is the Church Doing?* Hugh Martin, *Christian Counter-attack*.

And as the Church rediscovers itself, and awakens to the apprehension of its own nature, what is the burden of that discovery and apprehension? For it is only as this question is answered that we can rightly envisage the Church, and its place and mission in the world, at this or any other time. Primarily, then, the Church is the custodian of the sacred. It is the accredited witness to the fact of God, the truth of God, the claim of God on man. Over against the omnipresence and pressure of the secular, and the resulting tendency to see in the secular the sphere within which human life wholly falls, and by the laws of which it is wholly governed, it is the part of the Church constantly to point to an unseen transcendent realm, to principles of eternal validity rooted in the universe itself, a revealed law divine under which all life stands and by which all life is judged. First and last the Church is the Church of God, deriving from above and not from below, the creation of God and not of man, itself bearing the impress of the divine, and pointing men to the divine; the divine, however, not in remote and alien aloofness, but as made known and brought near in Jesus Christ.

For the God from whom the Church derives its being, whom it proclaims, and whose it is, is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, God as revealed in the Incarnation and the series of historical events which marked the passage of the life of the Incarnate Lord. And the very form which that revelation took points to the other and correlative aspect of the Church's nature and mission. For if it is primarily the Church of God, it is also the Church of man. It is the community of the redeemed and points to the conditions on which alone the potentialities of manhood may be brought to fruition. If it is primarily the custodian of the sacred, equally and by that very fact it safeguards the rights and dignity of the secular. It is, indeed, primarily a witness to the unseen

and eternal realm, yet at the same time it is concerned with that realm not solely in and for itself but in its relevance to man and to the visible historically conditioned order of human life. It points to that realm as one by conformity and subjection to which can man alone grow to maturity and human society be ordered to its true end.

The voice of the Church, then, is the voice of the divine wisdom calling to the sons of men, and proclaiming the way of life. As the embodiment in social terms of the Incarnation the Church is set to provide a visible pattern of human life as brought under law to Christ and so attaining its fulness. It is concerned with God and the nature of God, not, as it were, in a vacuum, in dogmatic detachment, in abstraction from the world of men, but with God as in Christ He reveals manhood as it truly is, and opens the way to the recovery in both personal and social terms of man's true status and dignity which he has so largely and wilfully forfeited. In the spirit of its Lord its mission is not to condemn but to save, not to destroy but to fulfil. It holds in trust for mankind, to be made available for human need, those resources of grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ, and by the acceptance of which, in the concrete conditions of time and place in which he finds himself, lies the hope of man's attainment of his full stature, the full flower and fruition of the capacities latent in his nature, but so largely and so tragically frustrated and rendered ineffectual by the withering blight of sin.

The Church, then, looks both within and without, to its own corporate life and to the world of secular interests and relationships without. In its institutional form, with its faith and its polity, its worship and its sacraments, its discipline and ethical standard, it is the fellowship of those, in the world yet called out from the world, who by their incorporation in it accept the full implications of the revelation of God

in Christ as the rule of their common life. Their membership pledges them to measure up to that standard of perfection of which human nature is capable when wholly subjected to the forces of redemptive grace, and that standard of fellowship of which man in his social capacity is capable when the love of God in Christ is the law of his relationship with his fellows.

But the Church's mission does not end there, with the life of its own members and the incorporation of new members into its fellowship. It also has a witness to bear and a responsibility to discharge in and to that whole secular order within which it is set. And whether that secular order finds expression in the State or in narrower and less representative forms of association, the Church is the standing witness to a transcendent realm of values authoritative for man, and to principles of ultimate and absolute validity, by the recognition of which as regulative for human life in every field and under the conditions of every age can right order alone be established and maintained.

The assertion just made contains no implication of a claim on the part of the Church to a jurisdictional authority over the wide and changing field of secular pursuits. It respects their rightful autonomy. It over-reaches itself, and courts rebuff, if it claims to set arbitrary limits to the exercise of man's creative energies, or to the fields of enquiry and action in which those energies find expression. Yet it as strongly asserts the relative character of that autonomy: and inasmuch as there is no form of organized activity, no form of association whatever its purpose, which does not raise issues bearing on the nature and destiny of man, it is in relation to these issues running up into the moral and spiritual realm that the Church has both a right and a duty to speak.

But in doing so the Church will base its appeal or its protest on the ground of what is proper to man as such. The

law to which it will claim obedience is the law which finds its sanction in the revealed will of God, yet is also the Law Natural written in the heart and conscience of humanity: the law which, once declared with authority, man as such instinctively recognizes as binding: the law by respect for which, in whatever sphere of activity, the foundation is laid on which the superstructure of man's higher potentialities can be built. In its prophetic witness to the things of God in relation to the world of secular activities, the Church appeals to a standard which that world itself can recognize and accept: and the authority with which it will speak, and the deference which will be accorded to its message, will be proportionate to the extent to which, speaking in the name of God, and voicing God's revealed will and way, it also and in the act of doing so proclaims a law to which the conscience of man as such assents and which is recognized as authoritative in the forum of the common mind and judgment of humanity.

Such is the basis of the Church's prophetic witness in the field of secular activities, which it is its mission to bring under law to God, to redeem, to cleanse and to carry to fulfilment by imparting to it, according to the measure of its readiness to receive them, those supernatural gifts which it holds in trust for humanity. Its God-given purpose is nothing less than that of bringing the kingdoms of this world to be the Kingdom of God and of His Christ, of testifying in the light of the revelation of God in Christ, of which it is the custodian, to the way of man's own self-fulfilment. Yet as the very condition of discharging that mission its primary care must be not to dissipate its gifts in a world that sets no store by them, but to preserve and manifest them in their purity and fulness in its own life. What primarily matters in the very discharge of its mission to the world without is the quality and level of its

own life. Concerned, indeed, to reach out to and to touch and transform human life on every level, it must not so far identify itself with the world of secular pursuits and interests as to lose its own distinctive character. It must remain a realm apart, in the very endeavour to be all things to all men. It is the light of the world, but if it is to penetrate the darkness and not itself be overtaken by it, it must ever draw fresh replenishment from its own burning centre. It is the salt of the earth and its first care must be to preserve its own savour: else it will only earn contempt and rejection at the very hands of those to whom it would bring saving health, that whole lump of human society, to preserve which from corruption, and to impart to which its own distinctive savour, is the very meaning and purpose of its existence.

For, indeed, this primary concern with its own distinctive character, and with the preservation and manifestation of its own distinctive life, is far from constituting the Church a sect formed for, and concentrated solely on, the spiritual welfare of its own members. It is set in the world that it may serve and save the world: and if on the one hand it must stand aloof from that world and deny it, as unhallowed and unregenerate, as, indeed, lying in sin, it must also, in the spirit of its Lord, enter that world, share its tragic lot, clothe itself with its conditions, and accept the burden of its sinfulness, if so be that it may bring to it and render effective within it the resources of redemptive grace of which it is the bearer. Thus it cannot escape that constant tension between acceptance and renunciation, affirmation and denial, in relation to the world, which is stamped on the Christian life as such: and compelled to that tension it will incur the reproach, and often justly, of conformity to that world on the one hand and of aloofness from, and indifference to, the world on the other. Nor can that tension ever be overcome, except on conditions

which attest a betrayal of the mission of the Church. Inevitably and always it is set between the two poles of withdrawal from and penetration of the world around it. For so long as the Church remains true to itself, the line of division between Church and world must remain, however far the Church has contacts with the world on every hand and, indeed, however far that world is itself ordered on its own level to a Christian pattern.

Indeed, it is precisely when it is set in a society itself claiming to be Christian, rooted in a Christian tradition and bearing manifest traces of that tradition, that the Church is, perhaps, most exposed to the danger of the loss of its distinctive character and of failure to maintain its own distinctive quality and level of life. In an environment frankly and avowedly pagan, as that with which the Church of the apostolic age was in contact, as that too which surrounds the Church to-day as it takes organized shape in the mission fields of Asia and Africa, the quality of fellowship and character represented by the Church stands out in stark and visible contrast with that accepted as habitual outside its borders, forcing the Church back on itself and on the necessity of concentrating primarily on the safeguarding of its own moral standard. On the other hand when it is set in a community, national or other, which itself claims to be Christian by tradition and accepted convention, as in the world of European and Anglo-Saxon society, it may all too easily be assumed that for practical purposes there are not two societies, each ordered on its own level, but one only, or at least that there is no clearly marked line of demarcation between them. As citizens of a nominally Christian country, members of the Church may all too readily assume, without scrutiny or discrimination, that the social and commercial standards of the world in which their work is done must

themselves be Christian and that they can accept and act on them without being untrue to the obligations of their membership. And, correspondingly, that same world, the world of a nominally Christian society, may well rest satisfied with its existing standards, however far, in fact, they are a standing denial of Christian principle, if the Church fails to bear witness to a standard clearly and markedly distinctive.

Considered, then, in relation to the world of human society, the Church is the organ of the Holy Spirit in convicting the world, by its very presence, of "sin, of righteousness and of judgment,"¹ not, indeed, for the sake of condemnation but in order to recall that world to the conditions on which alone it can be redeemed and rendered habitable. But this can only be as the distinction between the two is maintained. If on the other hand the distinction is unrecognized or obscured, it may well be that the world will subtly assimilate the Church to its own standards, and even seek to impose those standards on the Church by State and legislative action. The danger, then, of the secularization of the Church is most pressing, when it is in contact with a nominally Christian society which uses the Christian name to disguise motives and ends and methods, ways of thought and of action, which are in fact a flagrant denial of the values, resting on divine sanction, for which the Church stands. Here is a peril which can only be met and surmounted as, under these circumstances also, the distinction is maintained, and the Church knows the world for what it is, however far nominally Christian. It is there, indeed, to serve and to save and to redeem that world. But it is not by minimizing the distinction between itself and the secular order that it will render that service. Rather will the influence of the Church be most effective as it makes it its first and constant endeavour to strengthen its

¹ Jn. xvi, 8.

real as against its nominal membership, and maintains in its own fellowship that standard of holiness and charity which derives from Christ and the Gospel.

Our present concern is with the contribution which it is for the Church, in its institutional capacity, to make to the redemption of human society; indeed, to that reintegration of all things in Christ in which the divine commonwealth consists: and we have urged that while the Church has a directly prophetic task to discharge in voicing with authority the divine law as it claims acceptance and recognition in the secular sphere, its redemptive mission in relation to that realm will primarily be fulfilled as the Church is true to itself, and manifests the full richness of its own nature. Yet that very concentration on the quality and level of its own life will be directed to an end which extends beyond the Church and embraces the whole realm of human life. Its mission is that of accredited guardian of ultimate values of humanity as revealed in Christ and as destined to win application on every level and in every department of life. Above, however, and beyond the several departments of life stands the State, the *communitas communitatum*, "the existential sovereign unity of order,"¹ supremely responsible for the security and well-being of society as a whole and its members. And it is the State under present-day conditions, as the constituted authority concerned with ordering the secular life of the community, its attitude and relation to which are of fundamental importance to the Church in respect both of itself and of its impact on society.

As itself a society, organized on its own basis and for its own ends, itself too potentially embracing all men and touching and affecting all departments of the common life, the Church is to-day confronted with an authority organized on

¹ Rommen, *The State in Catholic Thought*, p. 144.

the secular level and for secular ends, which itself is equally all-embracing, and in its modern form tends increasingly to affect and colour the whole life of man, the shaping and moulding of his character as well as of the conditions of his life and work; and it is a matter of peculiar difficulty, but also of peculiar importance, to secure a working relation between Church and State under these circumstances such as, allowing to the full for the positive rôle which inevitably falls to the State of to-day in directing and ordering the life of the community, will both assure to the Church that independence in relation to its own institutional concerns which it can rightly claim, and also full scope for asserting those essential values of humanity which it is pledged to uphold as having an indefeasible claim to regard throughout that whole varied field of organized life of which the State takes cognizance.

And that field tends increasingly and, perhaps, inevitably to widen. The trend to State omnicompetence is not one which can be ascribed only to the scheming of ambitious men gathering all the strings of power into their hands, and using the machinery of State for their own ends. It is characteristic of other regimes than the dictatorial: it is characteristic equally of democratic societies, as the response to the demand under modern conditions for centralized planned organization to meet the needs of the community as a whole. It is only, it would seem, on such a planned basis, so far at least as the economic substratum of life goes, that such a foundation of right order can be laid as will give scope for freedom of initiative and expression on the higher levels. And there is little likelihood of the State, whatever the hands which hold the reigns of government, resigning the positive responsibility of providing the basic conditions of the good life, as it conceives it, for the community as a whole, or of

withdrawing again, in accordance with the Liberal tradition of the nineteenth century, into a narrower political department of its own. A laissez-faire policy of keeping the field open, and leaving the individual the task of making good, or failing, in the struggle for existence and success in his own strength, is in the highly industrialized society of to-day to condemn the mass of men to futility and frustration, in order that the successful few may survive and come to the top: and it is only on a basis of centralized planning, providing an adequate measure of security for all alike, that scope can be given on a footing of equality for the discovery and exercise of individual creative ability in any, perhaps unsuspected, quarter in which it is to be found. It is not, therefore, contended that in itself the extension of State competence and control, necessary, indeed, it would seem to meet modern needs, is a standing threat to the values for which the Church stands. Indeed, it may well be that that very extension can alone provide the conditions within which and on which those values can secure recognition.

Yet the issues so raised are such as to demand the most watchful care, in view of the danger constituted by the very presence and character of the omnicompetent State, not so much of overt attack upon, as of a subtle sapping and undermining of, fundamental liberties, of values in the spiritual realm of which the Church is the ultimate guardian. The danger is that of a steady, unseen, undeliberate trend to a conditioning of human character and life into conformity with a common pattern, reaching from the outward sphere into the inner circle of the mind and spirit, resulting from the subtle pressure of a centralized control constantly extending in range. For human nature, especially under the mass conditions of to-day, tends to be plastic material to the forces largely impersonal brought to bear upon it. There is an

inevitable tendency, at the price of security and a guaranteed standard of life, to conform to the uniform pattern of the State machine, and to accept what is so provided by the secular authority as a complete framework of life, a secularized order in which all human needs are met. And such State pressure may penetrate through the outer layers to the innermost core of the life of man, draining away the springs of inner liberty, the very life of the soul, and finding its outcome not in a free community but in a mass the units of which are reduced to a dead level of outlook and life within and without.

In face, then, of the peril, direct or indirect, involved in the growing area of life over which under modern conditions the positive welfare State tends to exercise control, and to shape character, the Church can render an indispensable service by the very fact of being true to itself and its nature, by the very fact of safeguarding and fostering in its own fellowship those essential liberties by which man lives, but which indirectly at least are menaced by modern tendencies to State omniscience. And not least would it render this service by maintaining its own independence of the secular authority, in all that concerns the ordering of its own life. Whether or not established in the technical sense, and however far as a property-holding corporation it is necessarily subject to State regulation, there is an autonomous realm which belongs inherently to it, and which it cannot surrender except at the cost of the loss of its own self-respect and of the respect of society as a whole. In this sphere, the ordering of its faith, its worship and discipline, the maintenance of its own standard in all that falls within its own scope, it cannot and dare not submit to regulative dictation from the State ; or if it does so submit, it must pay the price of dulling the edge of its witness in the world of men. At all costs it must maintain its own

right of association and of self-regulation, as a *societas perfecta* anterior to that of the State itself.

And indirectly, in the very act of doing so, it is also maintaining the fundamental right of voluntary association on behalf of groups formed and organized for specific purposes within the community as a whole. We have already seen that, in a State deliberately organized on a totalitarian basis, the party or other governing authority tends to stand out stark, alone and supreme over against the undifferentiated mass of individual citizens, over-riding and, indeed, directly denying any claim to autonomy on the part of associations, whether voluntarily formed for specific ends, or even association such as the family, belonging to the very nature of things and anterior to the State itself, except on terms prescribed by itself, and on the basis of the acknowledgment that all rights derive from itself and that all interests are subordinated to ends of State. Yet nothing is of more fundamental importance to the maintenance of a free community, and to the enrichment of its life, than this acknowledged right of association, whatever the level of sphere or interest with which it is concerned. Indeed, it is precisely in the protection of this right, and the regulation of its exercise, that the State fulfils its positive mission. And by the very fact of asserting its autonomy in all that concerns its own affairs the Church is recalling the State to the inherent limitations set to the area of its control, and contributing to the maintenance of the right of free association, subject only to the over-riding interest of the community as a whole, which is essential to a rich and varied civilization.

And if by the very fact of being true to itself, and to the Revelation of which it is the bearer, the Church is safeguarding for the community as a whole the right of free association, equally and on a yet more fundamental level it is

safeguarding the freedom of the person. For it is in reference to the person that there lies the main peril of society as organized and directed by the modern State, the subtle peril of the reduction of the individual to a subpersonal level, and of his submission, deliberate or otherwise, to the forfeiture of any sense of personal responsibility, the responsibility in particular of fulfilling a freely chosen function in the many-sided life of the community. Over against any such peril, of the reduction of the individual to a unit in a multitude on which a uniform pattern is stamped, it rests with the Church both to proclaim and to manifest the ultimate worth of the person, primarily in his standing with God, but as the outcome of the latter, also in his standing in the community.

For, indeed, the Church will only witness effectively to this truth, as it exemplifies it in its own life. The traditional conception of the Church as composed of the leaders and the led, the pastors and the flock, emphasizes, indeed, the responsibility which rests on the former, but suggests a purely passive rôle for the latter: and it needs to be supplemented by the Pauline metaphor of the body, every organ of which has a responsible part to play within it in the service of the whole. It is for the Church to recover, and to give expression in its ordered life to, the truth of the priesthood of all believers, the truth of "each as he hath received the gift ministering the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."¹ And in doing so it will not only be enriching its own life; it will be vindicating the fundamental rights of the person in society as a whole, the right in particular to be regarded and treated as an end in himself and as one who has a free and responsible contribution to make to the welfare of the body politic.

We have thus urged that the Church fulfils its mission in

¹ I Pet. iv, 10.

relation to the world on the one hand by manifesting in its own life and fellowship the values for which it stands, and on the other by the authoritative proclamation of the Christian law in the full range of its application to the varied levels and departments of society as a whole. And we have laid special stress on the rôle which falls to the Church as guardian of those elemental and natural human rights and liberties which directly, and even more indirectly, are menaced by the extension of the area of control and influence exercised by the modern State. In what, however, has been said there is no intended implication of the assumption that from the Christian standpoint the State as such is necessarily an enemy to be kept at arm's length, with the Church acting on the defensive in relation to it. It is true that in the growing omnicompetence of the State, even as democratically constituted, there are, as we have seen, subtle forces at work perilous to essential human liberties. On the other hand it is only by the co-operation of the State, as charged with the organization of society on the secular level, that any approach can be made, and not least under the conditions of to-day, to an order of society in which fundamental Christian values are respected. Church and State, each all-inclusive in its own field and on its own level, are in combination the decisive factors in the shaping of such an order, and it is, therefore, of the utmost importance from the standpoint with which we are concerned that the working relation between them should be such as to assure to each liberty of action on its own level, and particularly should be such, in view of present-day tendencies, as to provide scope for the authoritative assertion by the Church of those essential principles bearing upon character and social life which are relevant throughout that growing area over which the State exercises control.

Yet what that relation should be and how constituted,

with a view to these mutual advantages, cannot, of course, be determined in abstraction from the local and historical conditions concerned: and in fact that relation has taken widely differing forms since the break-up of medieval Christendom, and the assumption by the national State of supreme and all-embracing authority in the sphere of domestic and foreign policy. The Concordat basis on which that relation has been traditionally established in countries in which Papal authority has been maintained has normally conferred on the Church of the nation a privileged position, with freedom without let or hindrance to maintain its institutions and to provide for the religious needs of its members. Yet, necessarily, the Concordat is a legal instrument, based upon terms mutually accepted between bodies each concerned to secure its exclusive rights, and in particular setting limitations to the Church's liberty as well as securing that liberty within the limitations set. The use or misuse of the privileged status so secured has varied with the influence of the Church and the strength and independence of the State. Yet normally it has still left the State a law to itself in all matters of public policy.

Such at least, to take a quite recent example, was the case in Fascist Italy since the end of the half-century of Dissidio was reached, and the Lateran Treaty and Concordat between the Vatican and the State were concluded in the early years of the Fascist regime. In theory the establishment of this new relation converted the State from an enemy into a friend of the Church, and accorded to the latter a wide measure of privilege and authority, particularly in the realm of education and the spiritual upbringing of the younger generation. In practice, however, it was found, and increasingly as the regime advanced in totalitarian control of the life of the people, that the State looked to the Church not as a supreme

authority in the moral sphere of public as well as private life, but as the spiritual counterpart of an aggressive and imperialistic public policy: and the record of the years, during which under the Fascist regime relations between Church and State were so regulated, provides increasing evidence of a tension again and again reaching breaking-point, and of the impossible position in which, in spite of the Concordat, the Church was placed over against a political order which, whatever concessions it might make, was determined to paralyse the influence of the Church not only in the public but in the domestic life of the people, and to make the State the supreme arbiter of the people's destiny, only tolerating the Church's freedom of action and witness in so far as it could reduce the Church to a spiritual *instrumentum regni*.¹

Thus the Concordat method of regulating the relation of Church and State, however far satisfying to both parties, would not appear, at least under modern conditions, to provide adequate safeguards for the authoritative assertion by the Church of the principles which, from the Christian standpoint, demand application in national life and public policy. Does the same limitation rest upon the Establishment as the traditional method of regulating those relations in England? Here we are not concerned with a *modus vivendi* between a national State and a supernational body exercising a centralized jurisdiction from without. Here Church and State are both, from the standpoint with which we are immediately concerned, of and within the nation. Both are concerned primarily with the welfare of the nation, though they differ as to their interpretation of that welfare and the methods by which it is to be secured: and the Establishment is the form taken of the recognition by the State of the Church as qualified to voice the Christian conscience of the nation.

¹ Cf. Binchy, *Church and State in Fascist Italy*, cf. chs. xv, xvi.

and as looked to, by the very status legally accorded to it, to safeguard and vindicate in every department of the nation's life those principles which have their source and sanction in the Christian faith, principles the validity of which the State itself thus by implication acknowledges. Obviously, therefore, it represents a basis of relationship contingent and precarious, a mutual understanding which might easily be rendered impracticable as the outcome of forces at work in the life of the nation, whether or not directly fostered by the State.

Traditionally it presupposes that Church and nation are co-extensive in membership, and that the citizen as such is both a professing Christian and a baptized member of the Church. And such conditions have no application to-day. Not only is the Established Church but one among the Christian communities independently organized, not only is the percentage of the population represented in its professing and practising membership a low one; in the population as a whole there is abundant evidence of an extensive alienation from the profession and practice of any form of Christian faith. Yet, anomalous as under these conditions the Establishment may appear, there are values in its maintenance which would be forfeited, without hope of regaining them, in the event of disestablishment, values the loss of which nothing but necessity could justify, or action taken independently by the State to sever the nexus which Establishment represents. The ultimate test of the relative advantages of Establishment or non-Establishment must be found in the question whether, under one or the other, the Church is in a position to exercise the most effective influence, from the Christian standpoint, both on the State itself and on the life of the nation as a whole. The decisive issue at stake is whether the Church can speak with greater independence and greater authority, when its pronouncements are made as it were ab

extra by a body which has no legally established relation to the State and can therefore bear its witness from a wholly detached standpoint, or when, through its legal association with the State, it possesses formal recognition as the Christian organ of the nation and so can speak from within, as a body intimately bound up with the historical development of the people.

And, as so stated, there can be little hesitation as to the answer to the question. It is of course true that its privileged legalized connection with the State may tell against the independence of the Church's attitude towards and judgment upon issues of public policy in the national and international realm. There have been periods in which it has justly incurred the reproach of being the spiritual buttress of the established order, irrespective of the character of that order, and even the mouthpiece of the party in power; a reproach which in large part must, however, be laid at the door of the State, as represented by the government in office, and its readiness at such times to reduce the Church to the level of an instrument of policy. The danger of such a contraction of its liberties under State pressure, a danger which grows in urgency with the steady enlargement of the area over which the State exercises control, can only be met, as on the one hand, and at whatever cost, the Church asserts its autonomy in all that concerns the fundamentals of its faith, worship and polity, and on the other keeps constantly in view the duality of its nature, the tension under which it lies to be at once the religious organ of the nation, the guardian of the nation's conscience and the nation's channel of religious expression, and at the same time to recognize the link which binds it with the Church of all ages and all lands, its essentially supranational character, to acknowledge that its first loyalty is due to its Catholic and Apostolic tradition, and

that its first obligation is to exhibit a standard of fellowship and a quality of life which by their very nature transcend national and racial boundaries.

Here indeed is a tension, difficult to maintain, yet which cannot be evaded or overcome except at the cost of surrender by the Church of the truth by which it lives, which constitutes it what it is, the source of its authority and power. On the other hand, provided that this tension is accepted, and the price of its maintenance is paid, it is beyond question that, in its public witness and the deference accorded to it, the Church stands to gain, rather than to lose, by the fact of its intimate association with the history and life of the nation represented by the Establishment. It is not only that, as established, the utterances of the Church have a representative character as voicing the Christian mind of the nation. It is also that, in so far and so long as it holds good, the Establishment carries with it the implied recognition by State and nation alike that in matters of public policy, as in those of social life, the principles by which conduct is guided, by which life is ordered and policy is shaped, derive their sanction not solely from considerations of expediency as dictated by power or party politics but from the divine law as revealed in Christ, binding and supreme throughout the whole range of the common life.

We have drawn attention to the Establishment, in the form in which it still holds good in law in this country, as the method by which the mutual relations of Church and State have been and still are adjusted: and we have emphasized the advantages which this historic relationship, even under present conditions, continues to carry with it from the standpoint of the witness borne by the Church as the accredited organ of the nation's religious life. Yet most assuredly it is not a basis of relationship static in nature, and which can

look to the law, as the law stands, for its maintenance. It is, as we have seen, only justifiable in so far as it implies on the side of the State the recognition of Christian principles as the ultimate sanction of public policy, and on the side of the Church the opportunity of testifying, with greatest effect, to the supremacy of the law of Christ in all departments of the nation's life. But irrespective of the attitude of the State, and of the conception of man and of human society which now or in the future may underlie its policy, it is obvious that in so far as the effective membership of the Church is confined to a small minority of the community, and as, even so, it is only one among Christian bodies organized on a Church basis, there is a corresponding weakness in the claim of the Church of England, to use the historic title, to voice the Christian mind of the nation as a whole, a weakness which must subsist so long as the Churches are divided from each other.

For these divisions are proving increasingly "unhappy" and indeed intolerable, not only because there is so large a body of essential doctrine on which the Churches are fundamentally in agreement, but, and even more, because in view of what we have called the secularism of our time nothing unessential should be allowed to stand in the way of so reuniting the separated Churches as to enable the Church of the nation to voice, in a fully representative way, the Christian mind of the nation in reference to all that concerns its many-sided life. It is true indeed that the Religion and Life Movement and the representative expressions of common Christian witness by which it has been marked, and yet further the formation of the British Council of Churches, are hopeful signs of the recognition of the imperative need of combining the organized Christian forces of the country in facing the issues of the day. Yet such co-operation on an agreed basis of disunity is not enough, and is indeed a positive danger unless it stimulates

in all Churches the desire for such a measure of organic reunion as shall result under the conditions of our time in an Ecclesia Anglicana deserving of the name.

We must however go further yet, and measure the demand for effective witness to the things of Christ and hence for Christian unity, which a crucial turning-point of history is making, in far wider than national terms. The barriers which once segregated one section of humanity from another have been surmounted: and to-day human society is one the world over, and must stand or fall as one. And if the quest is being pursued with compelling urgency for a world-order through which the fact of that unity can find political expression, then no less imperative is the demand that the Church the world over should be enabled to declare as one that "law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus,"¹ with the recognition of which humanity's peace and salvation are ultimately bound up. For only so can the secular forces which are shaping the world of to-day be brought under law to God and so made serviceable to human welfare.

But here too, hidden from sight though they largely may be, the signs of the times are favourable. It is not only that under the impact of the time the Churches of the West, with which must be associated the ancient Orthodox Churches, have been drawn into a closer fellowship. It is also that a century and more of missionary enterprise, undertaken with equal devotion by these Churches, has resulted in the establishment of Christian communities, largely self-governing and self-maintaining, in Africa, in the East and in the Southern Seas. Nor are these Christian communities merely religious sects self-organized for the maintenance of Christian life and worship. In one area after another they are demonstrating the power of the faith and fellowship of Christ to

¹ Rom. viii, 2.

provide, in place of the old, a new spiritual basis not only for the social and economic life, but for the fundamental culture of the peoples concerned.

But over and beyond the growth to independence of native Churches, as organized centres of Christian community life, there has been in recent years a marked readiness on the part of these Churches to draw together and to the parent Churches of the West, a growing recognition of their very real mutual fellowship, and of the need of consulting and working together, if the testimony of Christ is to be effectually borne and heard in the field of world affairs. Hence the rise of what has come to be known as the Oecumenical Movement, the series of representative inter-Church Conferences which has resulted from it, and the recent establishment of the World Council of Churches as its standing consultative organ.

Here indeed is what Archbishop Temple, himself a leading figure in this movement, spoke of in the sermon preached at his enthronement in Canterbury in April 1942 as "the great new fact of our time," a fact which striking enough in itself yet inevitably points beyond itself, to a Church one and Catholic in fact as in name, through which the Christian conscience and mind of humanity can find utterance, and the spirit of Christ can work with leavening power within human society as a whole. For a Christendom in any sense conceivable in terms of our century can no longer be confined within geographical limits. And what indeed we look for, as the only adequate counterpart to a world-order of security and peace for the nations, is not only a faith held in common by all who confess the name of Christ, but a visible embodiment of that faith in a Church oecumenical in extent and in polity. For so only can be provided the conditions of a synthesis of secular and sacred adequate to human need and to the fulfilment of the divine purpose as revealed in Christ.

VIII

A RENEWED CHRISTENDOM

IT has been well said that "the ideal of a Christian civilization is not an order in which everything else is absorbed by religion, but one in which everything is vivified by religion, and attains its end more fully through its organic relation with the supernatural."¹ Here is a definition which, if it wins assent, provides the terms of reference, negative and positive, which we require as we confront the subject of this concluding lecture, and attempt to assess the factors in the situation of our time which seem to tell for or against a renewal of Christendom. Negatively the terms of reference so given are important: for they rule out the conception of any attempted return to such an absorption of everything else by religion as was attempted, and largely effected, in that unified order of society which under the acknowledged supremacy of the Church and the Papacy prevailed in Western Europe during the Middle Ages. There can be no re-establishment of what has been called a "compulsive"² standard of social order, as one which at every level and in every department stands in recognized subjection to the prescriptions of ecclesiastical authority. Medieval Christendom was the outcome of a stereotyped stratified form of social and political structure on the one hand, and on the other of a theocratic form of government and administration, which, however far taken for granted and accepted at a certain epoch, was inherently fragile, failed to provide

¹ Hawkins, "The Problem of Christian Humanism," *Aquinas Papers*.

² Baillie, *What is Christian Civilization?*, p. 34.

adequate scope, in spite of some recognition of the urgency of the demand and some effort to meet it, for new movements and aspirations in the sphere both of thought and of life, and which in fact broke on the forces, secular and religious, released by the Renaissance and the Reformation.

The rupture effected by these great centrifugal movements meant that, however far the idea of Christendom lived on, serving to differentiate the area to which it applied from the world without, Christendom itself no longer stood out as the single, visible, all-dominating fact governing and shaping men's lives, providing an authoritative norm for human conduct private and public, and uniting men irrespective of natural and national divisions in a single fellowship based on a common faith and finding highest expression in common sacraments. The two major factors, the integration of which in an organic synthesis we have throughout contended is the condition of right order in human society, drifted apart and became each of them sectionalized. And the modern age has been characterized on the one hand by the effective emergence of potent secular movements, in thought and action, of the human spirit, asserting a dominating place in the shaping of history, and on the other by a tendency to banish religion and its sanctions, and particularly its institutional authority, from a place of supreme regard in the ordering of human affairs to a side-issue tolerable perhaps as a self-contained department of life, but certainly no longer looked to to provide the accepted regulative principles to which the social order as a whole should be conformed.

Where, then, we have now to ask, do we stand to-day? In what direction do the signs of our times point? Is it away from or towards a healing of the rupture between secular and sacred, away from or towards a recovery of wholeness of life individual and social in a renewed Christendom answering

to the circumstances and demands of our age? It is tempting to find ground for anticipating, in accordance with the presuppositions of a dialectical pattern of history, that the epoch on the threshold of which we stand, an epoch it may well be of centuries in duration, will, following the long era of departmentalization, be one of synthesis, of a gathering up in a new and unified structure of society of the positive values secular and religious vindicated in isolation in past centuries. It is not, however, on any such a priori determinist conception of history, enabling us to anticipate its course, that we can base our expectations. For good or for evil man is free. His destiny is in his own keeping: and it is not the impersonal law of cyclical recurrence which governs the course of history but the direction taken by human intelligence, human will and human passion, and, more particularly under the conditions of to-day, as the intelligence and the will and the passion find collective expression.

This at least we can assert with assurance, that we stand to-day at a great divide in history, with a fateful choice to make which cannot be evaded, a choice between "life and good and death and evil,"¹ a choice on which the future of humanity hangs. And this too we can say, that if the choice is to be for life and not for death, it must be the outcome not indeed of the denial of the secular, but of the denial of the claim of the secular to self-sufficiency for all the ends of life, and on the other hand of a recovered belief in the illimitable resources of divine redemptive grace and of the provision of an adequate channel through which these resources can be made available for human need. Such are the factors taken in conjunction the presence of which can alone justify us in the belief that, if we of this age have vision and resolution adequate to the demands of our day, we may have reached

¹ Deut. xxx, 15.

a time of the "restoration of all things,"¹ of a reintegration of the dissipated and fragmentarized elements, each asserting its own independence, into which life has been broken up, in a fresh vital and organic unity of which religion will be the recognized seal and bond.

Any prospect, then, of a return of Christendom, in the sense of an order of human society based on the acknowledgment of the law of Christ as that under which all things directly or indirectly stand, makes its appropriate demand on each of the two realms, the relation between which, we have claimed, gives shape and significance to history. On the secular side it demands not the surrender of that measure and kind of autonomy which, within its own province and in reference to its own departments, the secular can and must claim, but rather the recognition, brought home in the hard school of events, of its insufficiency in and for itself to provide a complete frame of life within which human nature and destiny can find fulfilment. And, positively, what must be looked for, in view of such proved insufficiency, is a receptive and humble readiness, both on the part of representative individuals and of the organized fields of activity in which they are engaged, consciously and deliberately to order themselves in accordance with a standard of judgment and practice based not on sole regard for expediency and human interest, but on regard for the fact of a transcendent moral order, of final and binding authority, as that in the light of which the ends sought and the means adopted are to be tested and to which they are to be subjected.

But the demand is not only for a new approach and attitude on the secular side. There is an equal, and even more pressing, demand on the side of the sacred for a reassertion and a reinterpretation of its nature and claims in terms of

¹ Acts iii, 21.

the world of to-day: a restatement, through a channel recognized as authoritative, of the Gospel of Christ and its full implications for the circumstances of our time. And in so far as such a channel of authoritative restatement, and yet more of the resources of divine redemption and renewal, can only be found in the Church, it is on the Church that a supreme responsibility rests to renew and reorder its structure and life in accordance on the one hand with its supernatural origin and character, and on the other with the imperative claims which humanity to-day is making upon it, its witness and its redemptive mission.

Yet if such is the demand which the times are making on either side as the condition of the renewal of right order in the world of to-day, the signs are far from such as to give ground for confidence. On the surface at least there is little evidence in either realm, secular or sacred, of a readiness for the surrender demanded, a readiness to transcend its self-imposed isolation, and so to die to itself that it may live again in a regenerated order of human society. On the secular side we are faced by the confident claim that if only science has clear headway, and its range and achievements are extended further in relation both to the material conditions of life, and to the shaping of the social and moral order itself, mankind will emerge onto a new plane of security and well-being, and achieve a civilization in keeping with the age: but faced too, as the converse of this confidence in the ability of science to make provision for all the needs of men and indeed furnishing material for it, by a widespread apathy as to the spiritual issues of life, a disillusioned and cynical attitude to the claims of the sacred, and a relativism of outlook which is blind both to the fact and to the need of any moral standard given of God and of final and absolute validity.

Nor, in spite of the movements to which we called attention in the last Lecture, would it seem that the Church, as custodian on behalf of humanity of the values of the sacred, has yet given evidence of its sense of the greatness of its mission in this fateful hour, or of a readiness to measure up to the demands which the times are making on its spiritual resources. For what is called for from the Church, after taking joint counsel, is a prophetic word of redemptive power spoken with authority in the language of to-day, and a readiness, in the spirit and after the pattern of the self-emptying of the Incarnation, to pass over with this word to the place where humanity lies bleeding, wounded and half-dead by the roadside, and to spend itself in utter self-giving in the ministry of binding up, healing and renewal. Nor again, what is equally called for, is there as yet evidence on the part of the Church of such a re-thinking of the fundamentals of the common faith in relation to the world of thought, knowledge and achievement with which we are faced as to provide the foundation in terms of to-day of a Christian philosophy or world-view, which, true to the unchanging dogmatic presuppositions of the faith, finds room within it for the positive achievements of man in the scientific realm, and provides the outline of that reintegration of all things in Christ which is the goal of our striving.

We have maintained, in line with our subject as a whole, that the main issue with which we are faced to-day is that of a mutual approach on the part of the secular and sacred realms with a view to their effective synthesis in a renewed order of human society. And in so far as to-day the secular realm is pre-eminently that which falls within the province of science, the issue with which the future of humanity is bound up is concentrated largely on the mutual adjustment, not in terms of argument only but of life, of the claims of

science and religion. We have indeed suggested that there is as yet scant evidence on either side of a readiness to acknowledge the need, or accept the terms, of such a reconciliation. Yet it is impossible to exaggerate the gravity of the issue so raised: and it has gained tenfold emphasis in view of the latest triumph of physical science, the discovery of the secret of nuclear fission, and in the immeasurable advance in the control of the forces and resources of the material world which the discovery represents. For good or for evil we have entered on what has been called "the Era of Atomic Power,"¹ and are thus faced with the necessity for a decision on which the future of mankind hangs. And by the future in this connection we do not mean merely the nature of human society as it will take shape in the new era: we mean the question of the very survival of human society in any recognizable form. There is no need to emphasize the hard fact of the actual material peril, amounting to that of total annihilation, to which organized society is exposed by this new weapon of terrifying potency which science has placed in the hands of men. What we are concerned with is the question whether the realm of scientific exploration and discovery, extending by leaps and bounds the area included within it, will assert its own unquestioned self-sufficiency as an end in itself, the one all-dominating factor in the shaping of human life and destiny (and there are not wanting signs that this claim is being made) or whether such a commensurate and rapid advance can be made in the rediscovery of the spiritual resources available to human need, and the recognition of their primacy of place in human life, as to bring the great realm of scientific achievement into subjection to the creative purpose of God, and so convert its menace of evil into potentialities of good for mankind.

¹ Report of a Commission appointed by the British Council of Churches.

It is clear, then, that under the conditions of to-day the question of the mutual relations of religion and science is no longer, as in the nineteenth century, one merely of acrimonious and intellectual debate but of life or death for humanity. Nor can the answer be found in political terms only, in practical measures taken, and taken in time, and adopted by common agreement, essential though such measures are, to avert the imminent peril to which mankind is exposed. It must rather be looked for and made at a far deeper level, in such a reorientation of the mind of man, effected too with the necessary rapidity, as to accord primacy of regard to that transcendent order, with which, whether acknowledged or not, his destiny is bound up. Such a mental transformation is no denial of the great province of science, or of its positive potentialities, in determining the conditions of human life on the temporal level. It is to deny the sufficiency of science and its achievements for all the ends of life. It is to recognize man's ultimate creaturely dependence upon the transcendent source of his being, and the law of life which that dependence imposes, to recognize too his own need of redemption by a power not his own, and given of God, from the potencies of evil latent in his nature, and ready, if unleashed and unsubdued, both in the individual and yet more in the mass, to lay hold on the direction of human affairs and convert to purposes of utter destruction, material and moral, the powers now placed at man's disposal. Only on that condition have we any justification in anticipating that a new era of civilization may be dawning characterized by the entry of man into that enlarged heritage which science has thrown open to him.

And it is, we trust, without presumption that we call attention to the special responsibility which rests on our Universities, and not least on Oxford, to point the way to

that new synthesis of thought and outlook on life for which the times are calling. What we have earlier said of society as a whole applies with equal and intensive force to the University. We pointed out that what we mean by a Christian civilization in our day is a social order in which free and unfettered scope is afforded for the expression of the human spirit on the secular level, but in which also, however varied the departments of enquiry and pursuit, and however autonomous in method they may and should be, they find their point of organic unity in a common standing under law to God, in the recognition and acceptance of certain values of ultimate and unconditional validity, values which whether acknowledged as such or not rest upon and derive from the revelation of God in Christ. And it is, we would venture to urge, for the University, and not least this University, in a special sense and at the highest level to point the way to a Christian culture which can absorb and transmute the new knowledge. It was the signal service rendered in the past by the University to show the way to the integration in a genuine Christian culture of the Biblical Palestinian and Graeco-Roman traditions. Its standard was that of an integral Christian humanism in accordance with which classical and philosophical studies were pursued within the setting of a Christian way of thought and a disciplined Christian life.

That ideal still holds good. But meanwhile a whole new world of knowledge has swung into view, and in the natural and physical sciences, rich and varied both in research and application, has emerged a field of interest and enquiry which has not only vindicated its right of place as an intellectual discipline alongside the older traditions, which indeed bids fair to relegate the older tradition to a place of secondary regard, but which has set its stamp upon the modern mind

as a whole and provides the symbols and analogies through which life and the world are interpreted. We live in an age dominated and coloured by the scientific outlook, and no institution, however sacrosanct and however rooted in the older tradition, and least of all the University, can or should seek to escape its impact or its practical consequences. On the other hand, it may with equal emphasis be maintained that perhaps the supreme service which an older university such as this can render lies just here, that while admitting within its walls a wide and varied field of scientific studies and application, it should renew on a fresh and larger scale the earlier integration of the classical and Christian traditions, finding scope for the specialized studies in a Christian philosophy such as will reveal their common meaning and purpose by reference to a transcendent order to which they are subordinate, and gather them into a unity of which the ultimate bond is religion.

It is time, however, that we turned from the contribution which an ancient university seems called to make to a renewal of Christendom to the wider field of the world of to-day, in order to take stock of some major presuppositions, under the circumstances of our time, of a right order as constituted by a mutual reintegration of the secular and sacred realms. From this standpoint we have already emphasized the fact that the sacred must find primary embodiment in the Church as the fellowship of those who, within society as a whole, are pledged by their membership to live consciously within the order of grace, and to seek to measure up to the full Christian demand. Yet, in thus attesting in its own corporate life the reality and supremacy of the supernatural, the Church is far from being concerned only with the spiritual needs and aspirations of its individual members. Its mission is to bring the supernatural, and the vivifying power of

religion, to bear upon the whole life of man within the temporal and secular order. It is thus directly concerned with that order, and with the institutions in which it finds expression, as the foundation on which alone the higher storeys of the home of man can be raised. It will indeed seek constantly to incorporate new members into its full life and fellowship: but its mission in and to the world is not thus wholly fulfilled. It bears witness also to the fundamental claim of man to such conditions on the natural level as will provide scope for his primary needs and demands, the need above all of scope for a fully personal life.

And indeed when we turn to the situation as it presents itself to-day, it is on the necessity, from the standpoint of our whole subject, of the restoration to man of his rightful place in the natural order that we would lay primary stress. And, indeed, such a restoration is only the answer to a widely and deeply felt demand. The world, General Smuts recently maintained, is "moving to a new consciousness of the human."¹ We have seen that an age of secularism has been marked not only by a repudiation of the transcendent, and of its authority in its relevance to human life, but (and as a consequence of this repudiation) by a denaturalizing of man, a violent wresting of human life from the natural soil in which alone it can grow to maturity, and a denial of the fundamental claims of the natural man to such conditions of life as will alone provide the foundation of a healthy society. And however far in one sense religion and the religious institution, in the fulfilment of its supreme mission of perfecting the saints, can be indifferent to and independent of the secular environment, yet in another it stands condemned in the light of its own doctrinal presuppositions if it ignores as irrelevant the subreligious levels of life, as they

¹ *The Times*, June 1, 1946.

tell for or against the provision of a natural foundation for that order of grace in which religion is carried to fruition.

Indeed, if we have used the term "subreligious" of life on the natural level, this is not to forget that this natural order itself falls within, and not without, the creative purpose of God. Its demands are not merely the expression of the instinctive claims of man, or of his revolt against conditions which are a standing denial of those claims. Their fulfilment is also the ground of that freedom of sonship and fellowship which man was created to enjoy in his Father's house. And just as the divine was hidden in the humanity of Christ, and He stood where men stood, accepting them and sharing their life on the natural level, thus making that life the very material from which the Kingdom was fashioned, so it will be for the sacred to-day, while holding fast by its transcendent quality, its primary identification with the unseen and eternal order, yet also to take its stand where men stand, and to voice with authority the demand that the natural order, and the institutions in which it is embodied, shall be such as to answer on that level to the revelation of manhood as given in the Person of Christ.

And not least must the answer to this demand be given in political terms, and in an appropriate political order within national or other limits, and eventually world-wide in range. And by an appropriate political order we mean one which provides on the widest scale for the free exercise of political responsibility. We have noted earlier that the area of life included within the realm of which the State takes cognizance, and over which it exercises a dominating influence, tends, in face of the complexity of modern life in a mass society, constantly to be enlarged. Such indeed is the concrete situation with which we are confronted, and of which account must be taken. At the same time the recognition of

the situation as it is does not imply the denial that the unnatural conditions of a mass society, which call for an expanding degree of State intervention, might not have been avoided, had there been, at a certain stage in social development, a greater common awareness of the essential factors which go to the making or marring of true community. Under existing circumstances, however, and proportionate to the very extent of the field so covered by the State, and of the variety and importance of the interests included within it, there is the need of bringing it under democratic control, if the danger to which we have called attention is to be avoided of the conditioning of life and character to a uniform pattern imposed from without. And if, as we have seen, this is a moral peril which the Church by the very fact of being true to itself can do much to obviate, it is equally true that the first line of defence against it must be found within the political order itself, in the provision and maintenance of constitutional means by which the direction of public affairs is ultimately and effectually in the hands of the whole body of citizens. It is only on such a basis that in the political area the essential freedom of the person and the community can be safeguarded. In his great work *Civitas Dei* Mr. Lionel Curtis has made it his main endeavour to vindicate the claim that, whether within the confines of the single State or on a larger and eventually a world-wide scale, it is only through a political order based on the responsible participation of the whole body of citizens, through institutions appropriate for the purpose, and "on the duty of each to all, irrespective of national limits,"¹ that the Commonwealth of men's hopes and aspirations can take shape.²

¹ Curtis, *Civitas Dei*, vol. i., p. 286.

² Cf. op. cit., p. 285: "All this will be possible as we learn to accept the government of men by themselves as the guiding principle in public affairs."

This is not, of course, to claim any prescriptive regard for Parliamentary government in its traditional form as the sole adequate method of providing a democratic organ for the exercise of political responsibility. And still less is it to be blind to the peril of abuse and corruption to which this, as any other political order, is subject from the sinfulness and selfishness of men, or again to minimize the kind and degree of education which must be presupposed in a democratically ordered community. It is, however, to maintain that, essential to the maintenance of freedom both for the person and for the community, is the provision of adequate channels through which the widening field of political interest is brought and kept under public control, and the measures adopted are the outcome of the freely given assent, direct or indirect, of the main body of citizens.

From this standpoint the ultimate condemnation of dictatorship, and of absolute irresponsible power seized by and vested in a single figure or an exclusive party or both, is not the danger, imminent though it be, which such a regime carries with it to European and world peace: it lies rather in the passive and servile political status to which it reduces the mass of citizens. Deprived of or forfeiting any channels through which public or group opinion can find free expression, the franchise itself and its exercise representing an enforced and regimented expression of political judgment, the citizens, however far they may accord enthusiastic support to the regime, are in fact reduced to subpersonal units in the machine of state, the passive material of policies internal and external in the shaping of which they have no responsible share. Accordingly we would maintain that, in the realm of State affairs, with its far-reaching influence on the life and character of the community, it is only by the widest extension of the area of personal political responsi-

bility that the essential liberties of man can be safeguarded.

We have laid stress on what, for want of a better term, we have called the democratic principle in its application to the political sphere as among the factors, on the natural level, of which account must be taken in considering the foundation of right order in our time. What, however, we would further urge, from the same standpoint, is that, if this principle holds good in the political, it must equally hold good in the economic, sphere. And not least must it find application there in a transformation of the status of the worker. In a society such as ours the realm of organized industry is one with which the vital interests of vast multitudes of its members are bound up, as not only the source of their livelihood, but as shaping their outlook and character and the pattern of their lives. It demands, therefore, from our standpoint, to be ordered and organized with primary regard to the fundamental values of humanity. Yet it is precisely these values which were ignored and overridden in the structure of capitalistic industry as it took shape under the impetus of the Industrial Revolution. For the purposes of that structure the vast majority of those whose lives and whose livelihood are wrapped up with it have not been responsible partners in a common enterprise but a necessary element in its equipment. The wage status of the worker, in its traditional form, left him dependent on the will of others, not only for security of livelihood but for the shaping of his very destiny. He was the subservient instrument of ends in which he had no interest except that in their pursuit he earned his living. He was little more than a living tool in the service of the industrial machine. He had no responsible share, direct or indirect, in the direction of the undertaking in which he was engaged.

Here is a status which called, and still calls, for transformation if the worker is to enjoy the same freedom in the

economic, which as a citizen he already enjoys in the political sphere. Indeed, the spirit and working of the whole realm of industry needs to be so transformed as to constitute it a common service to the community in the rendering of which owners, managers and workers are jointly responsible partners: a transformation which, in particular, will confer a new status on the wage earner, and affect the conditions both of his work and of his life apart from his work. Such a status will not be compatible with the treatment of labour as a mobile commodity, to be planted, rooted up and set down again in new surroundings in accordance with the changing demands and needs of the organizing authority. It must, to the utmost extent possible, offer to the worker the opportunity not only of a settled home life, but of home life within the larger circle of the local community, thus providing for him and for his family an assurance of belonging, a place in which he and they can strike roots in the soil and secure a settled basis of abidingness and growth. The conditions of his work too, even if that work consists in the monotonous labour of machine tending, should be such as not to deaden but to foster in him a sense of vocation, of worthwhileness and spiritual value in its fulfilment, a sense too that in his labour he is discharging an essential service to the community.

It is not our task to make concrete suggestions as to the lines along which such a transformation of the status of the worker could or should be effected. Indeed, experiments are already being tried on a widespread scale, calculated to effect such a transformation, by taking the worker increasingly into the confidence of the controlling and managing authorities, and providing channels of consultation through which he can make his own responsible contribution to the conduct whether of his own department or of the industry as a whole.

What we are concerned to urge is that if right order, in the sense in which throughout we have defined it, demands under the conditions of our time scope for the exercise of personal responsibility on the widest possible scale in the political sphere, this is equally true of the realm of organized industry.

It is, however, in a reassertion of man's primary affinity with the soil, and in a reaffirmation of the cultural values associated with life lived in contact with the soil, that is perhaps to be found the most indispensable foundation, within the natural realm, of a Christian order of society in our time. For here is the life, on the pre-political pre-industrial level, which represents man's primary vocation, and more than any other brings him into conscious organic contact with the created order. It is indeed here that "the Tree of Life" can most securely take root downwards and bear fruit upwards. It is, as has been maintained, only in a "return to husbandry,"¹ defined as "loving management"² of the land, that are available the "means of recovering a certain order and mode of being which is timeless and universal, which is in fact a portion of man's nature."³ Here is that basic occupation which down the centuries, and indeed the millennia of human history, persists through all the changes which the structure of society has undergone, as not only that on which life itself depends for its sustenance, but as itself a way of life from which man can only depart at his peril, and to which again and again he must return if he and the society to which he belongs are to preserve health and harmony.

It is, then, not a matter only of so maintaining the care and cultivation of the soil, with the aid which modern machinery and scientific treatment offer, as to draw from it the greatest possible volume of its products. It is rather that

¹ *The Natural Order*, edited by H. J. Massingham, p. 1.

² *Ib.*, p. 8. ³ *Ib.*, p. 10.

this, the fundamental industry of man, defeats itself if its sole aim is a maximum production at a minimum of cost, irrespective of the short-term or long-term effect upon the soil, and still more irrespective of its effect on the age-long traditions of the agricultural community itself. It differs from secondary industry and manufacture in that in the cultivation of the soil man is not, as "manipulator,"¹ the sole and supreme master of his material. The law under which the countryman stands, and in understanding and obeying which his very life consists, is the law of nature, the rhythmic working of those natural processes of growth which answer to "loving management" but cannot be hurried or deflected from their course. Indeed, the countryman's long and perhaps hereditary association with nature, its order, its processes, its moods, brings him into constant and conscious relation with, and dependence upon, not only the order of creation but its divine Author, laying the foundation of a wholeness of life in which secular and sacred are integrated into a sacramental unity.

In this respect our own country is singularly rich. The very pattern of our countryside, based on the village and the family farm, is evidence of a good tradition which has not succumbed to the disruptive inroads of industrialism, and which it behoves her to cherish and restore. This is not to plead for a return to a premechanistic order of agricultural society such as prevailed in England prior to the great irruption of the Industrial Revolution. It is to urge the importance, in the replanning of the structure of England's life, of having primary regard for such a balance of town and countryside as not to sacrifice the values of the latter, and the life native to it, to the demands of the former. And if this need holds good in England, it is even greater on the continent of

¹ Barlow, *The Discipline of Peace*, p. 191.

Europe, if the basic elements of its traditional civilization are to be rescued and European society is to regain its traditional stability. For the basic factor in European society is, and always has been, the peasant farmer dwelling and working on his own area of soil, rooted in his familiar locality through the generations. And it is just this fundamental element in the structure of European life which war has gone so far to shatter, leaving in its trail multitudes of the homeless and displaced without local roots, without sense of community or of personal belonging. Hence a primary task in relaying the foundations of that structure must be the settlement of the units of this floating multitude on their own soil, in their own lands, with security of ownership and in freedom from the fear of the violent upheaval, from without or from within, of the settled order of their lives. Such is a primary condition of the restoration of a "habitable" world under the circumstances of our time.

We have been considering three great fields of organized activity, political and economic, in the life of the modern community, which both in themselves and in the principles by which they are governed have a vital bearing on human welfare: and concerned as we are with the integrity of the person and of the community, as an essential factor in a Christian order of society, we have drawn attention to a leading principle, applicable both in the political and in the industrial sphere, regard for which from this standpoint is imperatively called for. They are fields of activity which fall, indeed, within what we have called the secular realm. They belong to the natural, and not to the supernatural order. Yet they, and the principles by which they are governed, are not for that reason irrelevant to that commonwealth of which the ultimate spiritual bond is the law of Christ, the conditions, favourable or unfavourable, of the restoration of which under

the circumstances of our time we have been considering. For indeed it is the secular realm, and its manifold departments of thought and organized activity, which alone can provide the material of a Christian order of society. And hence arises the fundamental need for a secular order true, and not untrue, to the genuinely human. For the social structure itself, the framework and environment of life, and the motives and principles of which it is the expression, can go far to make or mar human life. And however far the specifically religious needs of men can be met and provided for under any conditions, social or political, yet religion will be little more than a way of escape from the tyrannies of outward circumstance, from life as lived in the world, and not its interpretation and consecration, unless those conditions are such as to represent, not a standing denial but a fulfilment of the basic demands of human nature, satisfying both the sense of man's personal worth and his need for a life lived not as a unit in a gregarious herd but as a member of a genuine organic community.

And yet the satisfaction of these primary demands, of which examples have been given, can in itself do no more than provide, to the extent rendered possible by human insight and wisdom, the conditions of life on the natural level, the basic elements of a habitable world which constitute the presuppositions of a renewed Christendom. It does not in itself constitute, or give effect to, a Christian order of civilization. For that something more and something better is needed. Indeed, there is a real danger that the establishment of conditions in the political and social spheres designed to give concrete effect to the basic rights of man, and the more so the more complete the provision so made, may come to be regarded as in itself fulfilling the requirements of any such renewal of Christendom as we can anticipate in our time or

in the future. The one thing supremely needful may thus be lost to view, and the good prove the chief enemy of the better. The kingdom of man's building, planned in the light of the best that he knows, may come to be identified with the Kingdom of God: and in the modern form, for example, of the social service welfare State, totalitarian in its provision for all its citizens' needs, and not less so, if democratic in its organization, the assumption may be made that man has all that he requires for the satisfaction of his fundamental demands and of his personal rights: an assumption which itself presupposes that human nature is wholly explicable in secular terms and man's needs capable of complete satisfaction on the secular level.

There are indeed, as we have repeatedly emphasized, conditions falling within the secular order, basic demands of man, which rightly call for satisfaction. But their satisfaction, however far complete on their own level, represents but the "beggarly elements" of a Christian order of society: and man, his nature and his needs, are wholly misinterpreted if that satisfaction be taken as a full and complete acquittal of human demand and of what is proper to him, or as constituting in itself the one essential condition of the commonwealth of his needs and his desires. For man is so constituted (such is his tragic lot) as to transcend the secular and the temporal, and only then are the needs of his nature met, only then is his life and its social setting related to its true end and to the ultimate law of its being, when the secular and temporal provision for his needs is subordinated to, and is itself made in the light of, a supra-temporal and supra-natural realm given and revealed of God. So only can human life, and the secular order in which it finds expression, be delivered from negation and frustration, and be carried to fulfilment. Essential, therefore, while it is for the relative ends which it

serves that the secular realm should be freely accorded its rightful measure of autonomy to provide on its own level the basis of the good life, it cannot from its own resources meet the full human requirement, or unless, to refer again to the quotation with which we began this lecture, it is "vivified by religion," and "attains its own end . . . through its organic relation to the supernatural." The realm of the natural, however well ordered in accordance with its own law, calls for redemption and completion in and by the realm of grace.

The secular, as we have maintained, represents a vast and varied field of human pursuit, endeavour and achievement, which with all its elements of positive and enduring value falls short of self-completeness, which indeed can only be delivered from ultimate frustration, from the demonic forces of destruction and corruption latent within it, and reveal and attain its full potentiality, as it is taken up on to a higher level than its own, and finds in the supra-temporal realm of divine revelation the secret of its true significance, the bond of its unity, the assurance of its fulfilment. It calls for transcendence in and by an order higher than and beyond itself. For man is only fully himself, human nature only then reveals its full capacity, as he and it are taken up into the divine. In itself the secular is no more than the wood prepared for the offering which awaits the descent of the fire from heaven to make the sacrifice complete. In itself, despite the splendour of its external achievements, it is but a desert and thirsty land calling for the outpouring of the Spirit, and to be watered by the river of life which proceeds from the Throne of God and of the Lamb. In itself it remains subject to the working of the mystery of lawlessness, unless and until it is delivered from the bondage of corruption by the liberating cleansing forces of supernatural grace. It awaits redemption, transfiguration, consecration by the touch of the divine.

It is, then, not enough to aim at and to secure conditions of life within the natural order which make provision in every sphere for the fundamental rights of man. Something more is needed than can be provided in those terms and on that level, if humanity is to manifest its fullest and richest potentialities in this or any other age. The fulfilment of these conditions is indeed a presupposition of right order, but does not fully constitute it. For that there must be provided, in forms commensurate with the circumstances of our time, that "better thing"¹ as the given means by which natural aptitudes and capacities can be carried to fruition and exercised to the highest end. These aptitudes and capacities may seek an outlet in various spheres, of thought and knowledge, of art and literature, of craftsmanship and technical skill, of social and political service, and above all of character and for itself. And it is not least in reference to the means of bringing to fruition these higher potentialities of man that the adjective Christian, as applied to a civilization, stands. Nothing can be further removed from what is implied in a Christian order of civilization than an egalitarian society characterized by a common dead level of welfare and attainment. It stands rather for the greatest variety of endowment and capacity, disciplined and fostered by education, but carried to fruition and rendered serviceable to the community as a whole through that something more, that element of grace given from above, directly or through covenantal channels, by which the natural is transfigured and consecrated by its contact with the supernatural.

It is indeed the very mission of the Spirit of Christ to make all things new,² to take of the common stuff of natural humanity and to reveal its capacity for the excellent and the perfect. It stands for quality of attainment in every

¹ Heb. xi, 40.

² Rev. xxi, 5.

sphere, as against a merely quantitative standard, however relatively high, of mass mediocrity. It alone can save us to-day from the imminent peril of the mass man and the mass civilization. It manifests itself in a community ordered indeed on the basis, provided primarily by the State, of according to every member his fundamental personal rights, but the deliverance of which from the moral perils to which it is exposed, and the bringing of which to its highest level of life in fellowship and of personal accomplishment, is the province not of the State but of the Church. There is a point at which the secular, however good and high its attainments on its own level, halts at the parting of the ways. Either, seeking to be wholly self-sufficient as a provision for human life, it stands exposed to the forces of disintegration latent and at work within it: or it must yield itself to the sacred and find redemption, completion and fulfilment through its organic relation to a higher than the natural order, an order given of God in Christ.

The question, then, with which we are finally confronted is that of the prospect of the reassertion of the sacred under the conditions of to-day in and over the whole realm of the secular. Given an order of life satisfying, so far as it can be satisfied, on the natural level, the basic human demand for conditions which safeguard the rights and dignity of the person and its fulfilment in community, how bring in and render effective that something more, that renewal and transfiguration of the secular without which, however well ordered in accordance with natural law, it must remain unfulfilled and indeed subject to disintegration from within? We have pointed out that that reassertion cannot take the form of a theocratic jurisdiction exercised by the institutional Church, legislating in the name of Christ for the various departments of human life. There can be no return

in terms of to-day to such a measure and kind of ecclesiastical jurisdiction as was characteristic of the medieval era. Any such attempted reassertion would be repudiated, and indeed would only serve to play into the hands of the forces of secularism. The inherent rights of the secular must be safeguarded as a primary condition of its acceptance of the supremacy of the sacred.

At the same time it is to the Church, and the Church only, as the accredited trustee and guardian of the values of religion, the authoritative interpreter to man of his nature and his destiny as given of God, charged with dispensing to men the grace given of God through Christ, that we must look for the reassertion of the sacred, in forms appropriate to to-day, in and over the secular realm. It is the Church, itself renewed and re-created in unity, holiness and power, which can alone effect from within such a leavening of human life, as ordered on the secular level, by the spirit of Christ as will enable it to transcend itself and to attain its end through "its organic relation with the supernatural." We lay emphasis on the words "from within." For it is rather by the transfiguring power of the indwelling spirit than by external and legislative jurisdiction that the sacred to-day can alone be effectively reasserted in and over the whole field of human life. This is not for a moment to minimize the institutional character of the Church, or the importance, for the sake of effecting this needed transformation from within, of the renewal of the Church's unity, the re-establishment of a common faith and a common order, such as will enable it to voice with supreme authority the mind of Christ in relation to the life of man.

And we still await the emergence of the Great Church equipped and ready for the supreme challenge which confronts it to-day. For if there is to be a resurrection of Christen-

dom, there must first be a resurrection of the Church, exemplifying in its own fellowship the power of the risen Lord to bring all things to their destined end through subjection to Himself. The primary call, then, to the Church, as has constantly been affirmed, is *to be the Church*, and so to die to its divided, blind and impotent self as to rise again in that unity, that power and that beauty of holiness which it is called to manifest to the world. And we would conclude by pointing to three directions which it would seem the Church is called to follow to-day, if a beginning is to be made in recalling the world to the one divine source and secret of its healing and renewal. They are indeed first steps only: yet it is only through such humble beginnings that the supreme task of summing up all things in Christ can be entered upon.

And the primary need in a world tempted as never before to seek and find its final satisfaction in a life ordered wholly on the secular level, and for secular ends, is that of the authentic fruit of supernatural holiness. The Church, its ministries and ordinances, are given for "the perfecting of the saints,"¹ the bringing forth and nourishing of children in whom the response to the full range of the Christian demand is seen. There is a call to some to-day to withdraw from the world of secular pursuits, and, whether in isolation or in separated communities, to practise the life of complete surrender, the giving of all for all in answer to the claim of Christ: and that, too, for the sake of, and as a witness to, that very world from which they withdraw. It is only by the presence in its midst of those whose lives are ordered on a supernatural level, and stand out as a visible protest against the all-sufficiency of the secular, that the secular world will itself awake to the reality of the supernatural and its relevance to human life and character. Still as ever it is the saints

¹ Eph. iv, 12.

who are the salt of the earth, and whose very presence can alone preserve society from corruption and impart to it a savour of life unto life. It is those only who, given to the hidden life of contemplation, or absorbed in an active ministry, manifest the spirit of total and unqualified self-surrender, who can challenge the attention of a deaf and heedless world to the full reach and range of human attainment when Christ is all in all in man.

And the second demand, following on the first, is, we would maintain, the formation of cells of Christian living and Christian fellowship on the part of those who, in contact with and over against a secularized society, will agree together to order their corporate life by the rule of Christ. It is the call to renew under modern conditions a position not far removed from that of the small Christian communities of the first century of our era, ordering and living their common life over against a pagan society. Or again it is to manifest under the conditions of the post-Christian Western world of to-day that transformation of life, domestic, social and industrial, which follows on the acceptance of the Christian rule and discipline, of which the mission field provides conspicuous examples. The condition of the effectiveness of such a cell or group is that it should be a cross-section of society as a whole, its members not cultivating a rarified and sectarian atmosphere in isolation from the world, but touching life and the secular at a wide variety of points, yet agreed on the endeavour to practise the way and will of Christ in every form of relationship and occupation into which they are brought. Such experiments in corporate Christian living, microcosms of a Christian civilization, will demand not merely goodwill on the part of those concerned but an agreed and thought-out Christian sociology, revealing the principles to which regard must be paid, and which must find applica-

tion in detail in the various departments of the common life: a sociology itself rooted in the truth of the Incarnation, and concerned to declare the full implication in the life of to-day of the Word made Flesh.

And the third demand which the times are making on the Church is that of sending out sons and daughters who have themselves been taught and disciplined in the school of Christ, on fire with the love of God and of their fellow men, into the thick of the secular and secularized world, there to "withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."¹ Here is that "apostolate of the laity"² to the world, whose calling and whose ministry are an indispensable contribution to the fulfilment of the Church's mission. Theirs indeed is the harder part to whom this call comes and who respond to it, harder than either form of witness already emphasized. For it means the readiness to pay the price, in isolation and suffering, of standing for the things of Christ in surroundings which are a glaring denial of them, and among those who openly or tacitly reject them. Yet their witness will only be effective as they accept, and enter fully into, the conditions under which their fellow men live and work, standing where they stand, but also by their tone, their conduct in everyday concerns, their very presence, revealing the supreme attractiveness of that something more which is the visible fruit and outcome of supernatural grace. It is for them to go out from the sanctuary "bearing forth good seed,"³ the seed of the faith, the hope and the love which is in them, to "make manifest in every place the savour of the knowledge of Christ,"⁴ and to reveal the power of that knowledge to transform, enrich and glorify human life.

From the altar they go out, and to the altar they return

¹ Eph. vi, 13.

² *Towards the Conversion of England*, pp. 50 ff.

³ Ps. cxxvi, 7.

⁴ 2 Cor. ii, 14.

For the final, as the first, call to the Church is to its mission of worship, and of worship which centres at the altar. There indeed, in the worship which centres at the altar, is the outcome of the three practical demands which, we have maintained, the times are making on the Church and the pledge of their fulfilment. And the worship so offered must be the expression of a fresh and living conception of the Liturgy, as not primarily a channel of private devotion, but of the corporate offering of the worshipping community. Nor are those who at any given time and place assemble themselves together for the liturgical offering concerned only with their own corporate and personal needs, seeking in the sanctuary a place of escape from the world outside. Rather they bear with them into the sanctuary the whole burden of sinning and suffering humanity, the world of secular striving, failure and achievement, that they may offer it to God with the prayer that He will reach down in power to cleanse, renew and transfigure it, and send the worshippers out consecrated to the high ministry of subduing to the sacred the whole vast field of the secular.

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